1;Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

as diagnostic of the presence of the kind of segmentary society in which we are interested. All the societies included by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard in their stateless category, i.e. Logoli, Tallensi and Nuer, have continually segmenting political systems. Of the societies with government, the Zulu were like the Ngoni in being a State and yet having a political system which was continually segmenting. Both of these states were organized by a segmentary system even at the highest level, so that it does not seem necessary to follow Fortes in restricting segmentary systems to only the sub-divisions of states. In Shaka's time various changes came about in Zululand, such as the concentration of the army in a central area, which lessened the importance of the segmentary organization. But in the eighteenth century large-scale relations between and within the Nguni chiefdoms were governed by the agnatic segmentary organization, that is, by the division of the people into clans, sub-clans, and lineages and by the continual transfer of allegiance by lineage segments from one chief to another. Even during the period of the Zulu empire, the continual segmentation of the constituent tribes was important in maintaining the power of the central government over them.[22]

If one of the main characteristics of the well-known African lineage systems, both in stateless societies like the Nuer, Tallensi, Logoli and Gusii, and in primitive states like the Zulu, is their political function, we may well inquire if these systems are not also one type in a more general category of political systems. Although lineage relations are essentially distinct from kinship relations, a lineage system defines political relations in the idiom of kinship. Thus in agnatic systems, the relationship between territorial groups may be expressed in terms of the relationships between founding ancestors who were brothers or fathers and sons. We have seen how among the Ngoni the relationship between captor and captive, between lord and dependant, and hence the relationship between the segments they founded, was expressed in agnatic terms. The relationship between husband and wife, lord and lady, was employed to define the relationship between the political groups they led, and in this respect the Ngoni system may be seen as taking one stage further the process employed in lineage systems, where most relationships of this kind are phrased agnatically. Among the south-eastern Bantu, however, the relationship between lineage segments founded by paternal half-brothers is defined in terms of their mothers' position as co-wives. Among some central African peoples, this process has been carried even further than

[22] Gluckman, 'Modern Zululand', pp. 147-54.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

among the Ngoni. Thus the device of perpetual kinship among the Yao, by which the holders of certain chiefly offices stand in relation to one another in a fixed arrangement of kinship positions, of Paramount Chief to son and to sister's son and to brother,[83] would seem to be an example of what is essentially the same process as that by which the dominant lineage in one part of Nuerland is conceived of as descended from a brother of the founding ancestor of another dominant lineage. Where a political relationship is expressed in terms of the connexion between husband and wife, rather than between brothers' or sisters' sons, we may find that a woman is used to embody the political relationship, and she then plays what is essentially a political role. The many wives of the Ngoni Paramount Chief were clearly used in roles of this kind. Not only were they rapporteurs for the Chief, as Deare points out,[84] but they were also living symbols of the political relationship between their segments and the State as a whole. Another central African example of this is the Lele institution of 'wife of the village' by which a village, as a group, may stand as daughter's husband or wife's parent to its chief.[85]

Wherever political relationships of this kind are embodied in persons who have private lives of their own, be they queens or sons-in-law of the village, there is bound to be some domestic and inter-personal relationship alongside the corresponding political relationship. But that should not obscure from us the essentially political role played by individuals in these positions. The analogy with the dynastic marriages of Western Europe is clear.

One of the characteristics of lineage systems and of the Ngoni residential system is that the transition from the ties of domesticity and close kinship to purely political relations is a gradual one. The same principles of organization apply at all levels, and it is gradually with the passage of time and with increasing structural separation and internal segmentation that inter-personal relations are replaced by those between groups, and actions based on sentiments of love and hate give way to those based ultimately on an appeal to force. Relations between the larger segments of a lineage, although expressed in the idiom of kinship, and although possibly explainable historically in kinship terms, are relations between political units, whereas the relationship between brothers living under the same roof is not governed by political considerations. The critical point at which relationships of increasing scale become dominantly

[83] Mitchell, 'Social organization of the Yao'
[84] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 27 April.
[85] Tew, 'Polyandry among the Lele'

1;Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

political would seem to be, for example, at the medial lineage among the Tallensi, beyond which generation differences are not recognized; and at the village among the Nuer. It seems probable that in the old Ngoni system the village was also the significant unit, above which relationships were dominantly political and below which they were largely determined by the multiplex sentiments and activities arising out of kinship and domestic association. This is certainly so in modern Ngoniland, although the same principles of organizaton no longer apply at all levels.

I have described elsewhere the critical position of the modern Ngoni headman, linking the political system with the network of ties of kinship and co-residence operative within the village, and similar conditions have been reported elsewhere by Gluckman and Mitchell. Above the village, whether in a state or in a stateless society, relations are in the main between enduring groups and are defined with respect to interests vital to the survival of these groups, even if expressed in the idiom of kinship.[38]

Granted the existence of primitive states with continually segmenting political systems, such as the Zulu and Ngoni, it is then possible to look at from another point of view the various African political systems for which there is adequate information. In terms of political segmentation on a unilineal basis, states like the Ngoni and Zulu are closer in form to the stateless societies of the Nuer, Tallensi, Gusii and Lozoli than to the Nupe and Kede states with their administrative systems largely independent of unilineal affiliation. To document this point fully would take us beyond the scope of this book; our purpose here is merely to emphasize the importance in comparative sudies of examining political structures from more than one point of view.

When talking of states, we make the convenient distinction between internal and external political relations. No such simple distinction can be made with stateless societies, for in them relations which are external to one segment are internal to the next higher segment, and yet may still legitimately be regarded as political relations. The pre-Shakan chiefdoms of Zululand formed a system similar to the Tallensi maximal lineages, and we may speak therefore in that instance of a segmentary system regulating political relations between states. Ngoni external relations were not regulated in this way, for the Ngoni were isolated and unique in a region

[38] For this section, see Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* and 'Kinship among the Nuer'; Fortes, *Web of kinship*; Wagner, *Bantu of North Kavirondo*; Mayer, *Lineage principle in Gusii society*; Gluckman, 'Analysis of a social situation' and 'Kingdom of the Zulu'; Gluckman, *et al.*, 'Village headman'.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

before it can be moved further. The same accumulation of snow then begins again with each fragment.

We can readily see that this system was one of great flexibility. The rules of the system were fairly definite, and the principles of agnatic descent and primogeniture were never violated. Yet it was a system very susceptible to manipulation, and one appropriate to a society with a rapidly expanding population recruited mainly by capture. The relationships between a man and his wives, his sons, and his other dependants provided the basis for differentiation within his segment, but they did not determine in advance which wife should be made leader of a bevy, which bevy should get most dependants, which of his younger sons he should favour, which dependants he would appoint as lieutenants.

Without a continual inflow of captives this wide pattern of segmentation might not have produced anything more than a lineage system on the same lines as the Zulu and Swazi. The captives were the bulk which swelled the segments, which benefited one segment at the expense of another. This system provided quasi-agnatic affiliation to people whose actual parentage was unknown or irrelevant. Because of this source of supply, much greater segmentation was achieved in each generation than was possible in an orthodox lineage system. The whole system lasted only seventy-seven years for the Fort Jameson group, corresponding roughly to three generations, yet almost the whole population of the Ngoni groups stemming from Zwangendaba, numbering perhaps half a million people, could at the end of that time trace quasi-agnatic ascent back to him or his forebears.

Membership of age-sets gave rise to one set of bonds which cut across the lines of segmentary division; those bonds created by marriage gave rise to another. A man in one segment was linked by ties of affinity to men in several others, and because of these ties interacted with them on formal and informal occasions, exchanged cattle with them, and had a joint interest with them in their common descendants. Though segments were not exogamous, a wife from a structurally distant segment had in general a higher status and was more likely to be selected as leader of a bevy than was one from the same minor segment as her husband. Within a segment a son of the lord might marry the daughter of a lieutenant, and lieutenants sometimes married daughters of their lord, thus blending the bonds of affinity with those of quasi-agnation. As the heads of segments, married women played a more important role than we usually associate with them in strongly patrilineal societies. The lady of a segment retained her connexion with the segments

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

to which she had belonged before her marriage, and in particular sent some of her children to her parents to be cared for until adolescence. In this way a web of affinal ties was built up, cutting across both the residential and age-set systems and acting against the fissile tendencies in the former.[1]

The ties that bound a man to his age-mates and to his matrilateral kin cut across those linking him to his lord and to his dependants. Nevertheless, it seems probable that even without this arrangement of cross-cutting ties, the segmentary system itself was not easily fissile. The State as a whole was primarily held together by its enemies, the external enemies who made it unsafe for small bodies of Ngoni to venture across the no-man's-land on their own, and the internal rivals who competed for the Paramount Chief's favour and who bided their time until they could lead off their major segments as independent states. The flexibility of the system allowed men to achieve power within it, and provided a way of balancing the interests of different groups, as well as making possible the few instances of fusion that did occur. The Paramount Chief was powerful, not only because of his mystical attributes and of the military successes of his people, but because he was the government. Through him the common interests of the tribe as a whole were expressed in an organized manner as against the interests of minority groups. Despite its segmentary form, Ngoni society was a State.

In later years two changes took place which increased the stability of the State, at least from a short-term point of view. In the first place, the external environment altered due to the penetration into the central African hinterland by Arabs, Portuguese and British. With this topic we shall deal in Chapter III. The second change, which seems to have taken place among the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, was in the internal organisation of the State. In that particular group, neighbouring tribes were brought under subjection as political groups, not as individuals, and the conquered peoples were either allowed to retain their own chiefs as subordinate rulers or else were attached in large batches to various important headquarters. A distinction emerged between the aristocracy and the conquered peoples, and the army was no longer simply the aggregation of age-sets but included quasi-professionals supplied by a near-by unconquered Cewa chief Mwase Kasungu, who were armed with guns. Similar changes may well have taken place among the Ngoni groups in Tanganyika, who were more closely involved with the slave trade to the coast

[1] See the discussion of affinal linking in my *Marriage*, pp. 10-11.

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Mpezeni

184 genecus or wholly integrated one. It is a plural society, in which
648 as yet the Administration represents the interests, albeit the enlightened interests, of one caste and the Ngoni belong to another. Ngoni share an interest in tobacco booms with their White and Indian neighbours, and they share an interest in the colour bar with distant tribes, but the field of common interest of Northern Rhodesia, or any other major geographical unit, as a multi-racial whole is still small. Ngoni society has not as yet become as wholly integrated into the larger society as have say, the rural districts of Britain, because the well-integrated larger society does not yet exist. Meanwhile the Ngoni still retain a considerable identity of their own, and the chiefs and the Native Authority provide the nucleus for that identity. As such, the posts of chief and to a lesser extent of councillor have more than mere administrative significance. Native [645] Authority officials are still bound by ties of kinship to their people [602] and are still the living embodiment of sentiments of group loyalty and unity. They may have a variety of roles to play which are recognised as distinct, but they still have little private life, in which what they do is of no public concern. In matters of religion [771] Ngoni identify themselves with their co-religionists, dead or living, in other parts of the world, rather than with their pagan forebears. But in political matters Ngoni still identify themselves with Zwangendaba and Shaka and their successors rather than with the British Administration and the Queen of England. They claim the battle of Jericho as one of their victories, but not yet Trafalgar.

There has always been a clear division between the African
202 full-time employees of the Administration and the chiefs. A formal
648 distinction was made as early as 1904 between the Boma messengers, later known as district messengers, attached to the Native Commissioner's office, and the chiefs and district headmen who lived in their own villages. There were also at that time district messengers, later called divisional headmen, who lived in their own villages but received a few shillings a year as stipend and acted as policemen and messengers for the Administration.

Nowadays the Administration employs Africans in a variety
647 of posts, the most important being those of messenger and clerk.
624 The messengers are mainly stationed in Fort Jameson and Fort
649 Manning and visit the rural areas on specific errands or accompanying a District Officer on tour. From time to time messengers are sent to live at compounds scattered through the countryside, where they remain for a few months at a time and act as rural [673] constables, enforcing laws relating to such activities as cultivation

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

In contrast to this, the private affairs of the chiefdainship, matters connected with royal cattle, disputes among the chief's wives and quarrels between the chief and his affines or close supporters are discussed at the chief's village. Quarrels of an apparently trivial nature, such as a chief's wife's running away with a kraal driver, would in the old days have threatened the whole internal structure of the county segment, and they are still treated as questions of State by the lieutenants and kinsmen of the chief who attend these meetings. The contrast between these two kinds of assembly is striking. They are described by different vernacular terms,[a] and while any man can attend and speak at a meeting at the court, it would be considered inappropriate for him to intervene in a meeting at the chief's village unless his position in the old residential system was a high one. Women listen to court meetings, but rarely if ever speak, for the Administration works very largely through men and it is men who discuss the kinds of thing in which the Administration is interested. At the chief's village, the interests of the chief's kinswomen and wives are often directly concerned and they themselves contribute to the discussion. The marriages of chiefs established, and to a lesser extent do still reinforce and establish, affinal ties which cut across the cleavages between segments and which were crucial to the balance of power within the State. A quarrel between a chief and his wife was a matter of political, and not merely domestic, significance and must therefore be discussed by the chief's political advisers.

The sanction of deportation appears to be employed only in connexion with offences against the chiefdainship. Thus a lieutenant who embezzled some royal cattle was called before a meeting at his chief's village attended by the important lieutenants in the county, and ordered to leave the country. Similarly, a man who was found drinking with a chief's wife under suspicious circumstances was ordered to leave the country by a tribunal of this kind. He moved first to another county, but was forced to move on again out of Nguniland. Such actions are sometimes taken without reference to recognized Native Courts or to the Administration, and the effectiveness of the tribunal's decision depends on the support it has from the people as a whole and from the Native Authority organization rather than on the ultimate sanctions wielded by the Administration. However, when matters of this

[a] A meeting to discuss matters of general interest is *umshumo*; one to discuss affairs of the chiefdainship is *lukungu*. cf. *ku-mshuma*, to assemble (Nyanja) and *ukU)kusha*, assembly (Zulu). The different derivation of the words, from Nyanja and Zulu, is significant. *Lukungu* also means *ngoni*.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

guish them from their neighbours are no more significant than the many varieties of custom and belief which are to be found in every Ngoni village. They do not form a group among themselves, their members participate in all communal activities in their counties and are to be found at all levels of the Native Authority organization below that of chief. They are linked by kinship to their neighbours. The two Nyasaland counties, however, include relatively large areas where there are only Cewa-speaking villages, and many of these claim that they have been placed under Ngoni rule only by Administrative action. From time to time they have made efforts to break away and to attach themselves to some neighbouring Cewa chief or to establish a separate chiefdom. There appears to be a sharp distinction between the Ngoni chiefs, with the villages in their county segments, and their Cewa-speaking subjects. It will be remembered that the two Nyasaland chiefdoms represent the head of the eastern movement of Mpezeni's group, and that some of the settlement across the border took place as late as 1897. It is not surprising therefore that in these two counties assimilation of Cewa captives and immigrants has not proceeded so far as in the longer established counties in Northern Rhodesia.

11. *Conclusion*

In this study we have attempted to show what has happened in Ngoni political life during a period of 130 years. To-day Ngoni society is changing but this has not always been so. Prior to the arrival of Wiese in 1886, the actually existing social relations were changing, but the form of the social structure remained the same. Each new segment developed along lines that were already known and each time the State split, the new States were copies of the old. A system of this kind could not have lasted for long, for the supply of new recruits to the Ngoni States must have sooner or later been exhausted. In Africa, even if the overall conditions facilitated the emergence of this kind of migratory militarism, they were particularly unfavourable for its prolonged continuation. The Arabs and the European Powers behind them were closing in on the centre of Africa, and Ngoni days were numbered. Then came the defeat of the Ngoni in 1898 and the emergence of a new system, in which some of the actually existing political groups, and the relations between them, appear to have a much greater stability than before. But at the same time society as a whole has become much more diversified, the spatial distribution of men and women in significant relationship with one another has become highly complicated, and

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

643 644 762 766 came, 'to quieten them'. Thereafter this Ngoni boy did everything with the Paramount. He began by washing with the royal medicine at the time of the accession. He drank beer with him, he ate with him, he 'stood with him' (*amaima naye*) on all important occasions, such as sending out the army and judging cases. He slept in his own hut which was in the *cigodlo*, where the Paramount's sons built, and when he married he built huts for his wives in that same section of the royal village. At the death of the Paramount, he danced the war-dance in full war-dress and leaped on to the pyre to perish with the dead Paramount in the flames.

[582] [602] Informants sometimes said of this Ngoni boy that he was 'of one blood' with the Maseko clan. They described the relationship between the two clans as that of *cibale*, brotherhood, which excluded all possibility of inter-marriage. Between the Paramount and the Ngoni boy was established a joking relationship, so that the Ngoni boy could say 'good and bad things to the Paramount'.

643 644 It was clear that the ritual and social aspects of this relationship complemented and supported each other. The recurrent emphasis on the taking of medicine at the accession, on the participation in the war medicines, and most of all on the death on the Paramount's funeral pyre, were all evidence of this ritual relationship. Informants repudiated any idea of a scapegoat which involved protecting the Paramount from poison by eating before him. They reiterated several times that the Ngoni boy did not eat *before* the Paramount; in fact he ate after him though sharing his food dishes. Surrounding the Paramount were other boys called *micotho*, who performed the duties of pages or personal servants. The Ngoni boy was always distinct from them, and the distinction lay in the combined ritual and social relationship.

The concept of a 'shadow' was of something very close to a person, almost indistinguishable from the person himself. In referring to the Ngoni boy in the terms 'he was as the shadow of the *inkosi*; he was as himself', informants emphasized the extreme closeness of the tie between the two men. It seemed as if the royal shadow existed to meet a need for strengthening the Paramount by giving him a second self. It emphasized also the dangerous sphere of life and action in which the Paramount lived, due to the medicines he had used, his powers to protect the land and its fertility, and his power to give strength to the army through the use of the *tonga* medicine. No one else in the royal family shared these dangers and there was inherent in the relationship of royal shadow to *inkosi* the sense of some security through a companionship where protective medicines were shared as well as the hazardous occasions for which they gave protection.

643 644 608 This intense and dangerous ritual relationship was buttressed by the social ties binding the Ngoni boy to the Paramount. We have seen that between them as individuals there was that freedom of a joking

2: Read E-S (1935-1939) 1956
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584 period within which the handing over of cattle was completed varied according to the demands of the girl's father and the capacity of the man's father to find the required number. Informants agreed that when only a few beasts were demanded, the transfer took place before or immediately after the main ceremony. In addition to this formal transfer agreed on and carried out as part of the marriage contract, there was also an informal reciprocal transfer which had two main purposes. At the time of the main ceremony the bride's party brought with them a beast, called *mzondo*, which was put into the herd of the bridegroom's mother's house to which the bride would henceforth belong. Later, when the two families ate together for the first time, one or more additional beasts were brought from the girl's former house and put into the herd of the house to which she now belonged. In this way, the new wife began to have cattle in the herd of her mother-in-law's house which were known as hers and which would be taken to form a new herd when she went out with her husband to his *kwangala* village. As soon as these cattle were in the kraal of the house to which she now belonged, the new wife was able to eat *amasi* in her husband's village, which she had not been allowed to do since leaving her father's village.

571 515 In the series of feasts which marked the stages in the marriage relationship and which facilitated the coming together of the two families, the major part was played by the *indlunkulu* in each village. Many households in the girl's village shared in the preparation of food for the betrothal feast, but it was assembled when cooked and divided out by the woman owner of the *indlunkulu*, assisted by the men and women belonging to the girl's father's house. The next feast was in the man's village, and formed part of the main ceremony, before the bride's party returned to their home. The third feast was to celebrate the 'showing of the hearth-stones', when the young wife was allowed to cook in her husband's village for the first time. The food was collected in her parents' village and carried to her new village, where it was cooked by the women of the house into which she had married, and served in the courtyard of the *indlunkulu*. In the two final feasts—the *umsongo* which was a beer drink, and the *isinyongo*, a feast of beer and food—the beer was brewed and the food collected in the wife's village and cooked and eaten in the courtyard of the *indlunkulu* in the husband's village. These two feasts finally broke down the barrier between the parents-in-law and were the first occasion on which they ate and drank beer together.

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515 The main ceremony (*mtimba*) had three distinct parts.[1] The first part included the preparation of the girl in her own village (*ukusonga*), the entrance of her party into the man's village and the presenting of snuff

[1] I was present at an *mtimba* in Rumbwesi in the northern kingdom when the traditional ritual carried out in full was combined with a church wedding. The bridegroom was a man of the Dhlamini clan from Swaziland, who had been adopted by Chief Mbelebe and had built a hut in the *ugudu* of the big house.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

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binding contract. In theory at least the girl left her family for good once the agreed *lobola* was handed over, and the responsibility for adjustment to the family she had entered was hers, first as wife and then as mother.

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Investigation of the terminology associated with the Ngoni concept of family immediately poses problems of relating group structure to individual and group relationships. Dr. Kuper did not refer to any single term for family among the Swazi. The nearest was the term *umuti* used for homestead[2] which covered a recognized leader and his dependents, in terms of common residence, mutual relations and economic activities. The Cewa term *banja*,[3] widely used in Nyasaland in the 1930's to translate 'family', in its general use was more akin to the Swazi *umuti* since it denoted the relationships of a group of people to one man, and their common residence in a single village or a section of a village. *Banja* was used to express relationship to one man by kinship and marriage, but when it was used among the central Ngoni it also applied to other individuals, such as his age mates and the descendants of his father's former captives who lived in the same village. Another Cewa term *mbumba* was used in two distinct senses. The common use was to express the relationship of one man with his sisters and their children who inherited his position and his property and looked to him for assistance. A much less common use of the term was found sometimes in central Nyasaland and occasionally in north Nyasaland to cover the group of a man and his children and his brothers and their children—a patrilineal concept of a kinship group which was usually but not always associated with common residence.

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There was one major difference between the Ngoni concept inherent in their use of *banja* and that of the Cewa and other matrilineal peoples. When an important man or woman died among the Cewa, someone always 'entered their place' in the kinship system, and this acquiring of a new position involved a shift in actual relationships and in terminology throughout the group of kin. There was no such change among the Ngoni in the use of kinship terms. When a man or woman among the Ngoni entered a dead person's place it was in order to perform his functions and not to assume the dead person's kinship relationships.

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The village lay-out in different types of Ngoni village illustrates the way in which family grouping could be recognized in the sharing of the same hut, in the grouping of huts, and in the relations with neighbouring villages. Later in this chapter illustrations will be given from the northern and central Ngoni kingdoms to show how certain patterns of residential grouping on a family basis were evolving from the divisions of mixed tribal groups characteristic of the former large villages of pre-European days. The general tendency in northern Ngoniland was to

[2] op. cit. p. 58.
[3] Rowe and Hodgson in their dictionary translate *banja* house, home, household, family.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

of this book, especially Chapters IV and V will show how the organization of Ngoni society and the cultural way of living in it, necessarily surrounded the life of children and the training given to them with a much wider horizon. We shall talk about the family, the household, the village as the setting of Ngoni child life, but these terms have to be interpreted according to the Ngoni social organization, sketched very briefly in Chapter I and set out at length in my earlier book *The Ngoni of Nyasaland*. Looked at from another angle, we can see that a young child's horizon in Ngoni villages was limited at first to what he saw around him and the people who had daily or frequent contact with him and who understood and supplied his daily needs. But that circle of people forming a young child's contacts was from the beginning much wider than the individual family which a child was born into. When he began to run about and to pass beyond the restricted confines of the household, it was as we shall see, the duty and responsibility of all Ngoni adults to notice his behaviour and correct him when necessary.

The relationships inside the large Ngoni families, between one family and another in a Ngoni village, with related families in other villages, with all members of the same clan living in an area—these were threads in the web of kinship and clanship which united the Ngoni people. These threads were also inseparable from the political links between the people and their territorial chief, and between the whole people and the Paramount, the head of the kingdom. The difference, however, between the Ngoni kingdom under the Paramount which included all his subjects of Ngoni and non-Ngoni ethnic groups, and the Ngoni aristocracy in the villages was a profound difference. It was the latter who understood, appreciated and sought to hand on to their children Ngoni ways of living based on Ngoni values. Hence in most villages there were sharp distinctions between standards of behaviour within Ngoni families and in non-Ngoni families.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

choice and variety of food, was primarily to please him, and 593
to meet the incessant claims on his hospitality when visitors 592.
came. A well-ordered and harmonious household also pleased
him, and conversely the sounds of women quarrelling an- [183]
gered him and violated his canons of accepted Ngoni be-
haviour. It was his wife's task to supervise the household 957
helpers, who were mostly non-Ngoni, and to make them 592.
conform to Ngoni patterns by controlling their anger, instead
of yelling at each other and hurling accusations of witchcraft
at those with whom they were angry.

Ngoni women also took a serious view of another aspect of 592
pleasing their husbands, namely attention to their person and 593
dress. The old elaborate hair-dressing of Ngoni women, the 592
scrupulous washing of their bodies with sweet-smelling leaves, 515
the use of oil and clarified butter on the skin and hair, and 901
the careful tying and draping of cloths and arranging of
head headbands and necklaces—these all were forms of
beauty treatment and personal hygiene designed to please
the husband. They also reinforced the self-respect and author- [545]
ity of well-born Ngoni women, marking them out by their
well-groomed appearance from the 'workers' and 'helpers'
who surrounded them.

The young Ngoni child, up to the age of six or seven, grew 402 ●
up in a women's world of the kind just described. His mother 855
was learning from his paternal grandmother the increasing [404]
duties and responsibilities of an Ngoni wife, although she
was supposed to have learned some of them in her own home
from her mother before marriage. We saw in Chapter II how
the social horizons of a small Ngoni child were never of a
narrow type, restricted to his individual family. The care of
a child, especially between the time of weaning and the
coming of second teeth, was the concern of a number of
women in addition to his own mother, from whom he was
snatched away at weaning, and, for a time at least, kept
away from her household for eating and sleeping.

Among the female population of a village most nearly [54-]

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

related to a young child by kinship, there were three distinct age-groups. Nearest in age to him were his older sisters, children of his own mother, of his father's other wives, and of his father's brothers' wives. When he began to talk he addressed all these as 'sister', or rather as 'my sister', and they took a kindly interest in him, especially if he were a boy and therefore to be removed from them when the time came for him to live in the boys' dormitory. They played with him, they sometimes carried him about while the nurse girl did something else, they ground bulrush millet or roasted ground-nuts to give him as snacks. They were particularly concerned with teaching him to speak correctly, to say the right names for things, to use the correct terms for older people, and later to sing the refrains of little songs in their singing games.

Above this sister group in age came his own mother and his other 'mothers', who were his father's other wives and his father's brothers' wives. All of them he was taught to address as 'my mother'. His father's sisters on the other hand, who took a special interest in his upbringing, he addressed as 'woman father', and the name implied some measure of the authority which his father and his father's brothers exercised in the household and in the village.

Above this generation of mothers and woman-fathers came the grandmothers. Pre-eminent in supervising his life and the care taken of him was his father's own mother, but he also addressed as 'grandmother' his grandfather's other wives and his grandfather's brothers' wives.

The same triple grouping by age and generation, which the child learned by degrees to distinguish among his own kin, was repeated among the 'helpers' in his mother's and grandmother's households. There were young children who were the children of the household staff. His nurse girl and her fellow nurse girls formed a slightly senior group in this division, both by reason of their responsibilities as well as of their age. Above them, as the next generation, were the

women helpers of his mother's age, one or two of whom had come with her at her marriage to attend her, and who themselves had married in her new village. Above them again were the older women helpers of his grandmother's generation, themselves grandmothers, whom he addressed as 'grandmother', as he did his own grandparents.

There were other sets of people whom the young child saw less often. When he visited his mother's relatives in her old home, he enjoyed all the allurement a child feels for living in a different place among people who want to gratify his every wish. Sometimes the maternal relatives visited the child's home, but then their relationship with him was on more formal terms. They did not dare for example to give him titbits in private, or to pet him, or even to correct him, lest his father's relatives might notice and remind them: "This is *our* child."

Other strangers came and went all the time, and the child learned to distinguish between the village inhabitants and those he, and others, designated as 'strangers'. He saw mostly the women who were entertained in the compound of his grandmother. He was sometimes taken by his mother when she went to greet strangers by the big house, and he learned early that he was not expected to make a noise or call attention to himself in the presence of these strangers.

In this women's world the higher age-group in each status group, that is of relatives and helpers, carried the chief authority, gave orders, and rebuked all below them for breaches of etiquette or failure to carry out commands. For the small child, the whole superstructure of authority in the women's world built round his daily life a sense of security, partly because it was so ordered and so little variable. When the Ngoni said, 'A child belongs to all the village. They can all cherish him and correct him,' they really meant this women's world, organized through the households and the families and the houses. The child's needs for food and sleep, washing and warmth, care when sick, were taken care of

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

827 577 gardens was not required of most Ngoni women, though they were expected to know by experience how to hoe and to pound, to mud walls and to clean a house in order to supervise their helpers and to see that household work was done efficiently.

577 581 [826] In addition to being healthy, the ideal Ngoni woman was always well-groomed. She might lack the facial formation of high cheek-bones, narrow nose and deep-set eyes and the light bronze colouring which were the accepted standards of beauty. Even without these natural, usually inherited, advantages she spent, as we have seen, much time every day [302] taking care of her skin and hair. When she was receiving visitors or sitting outside her hut, her two long cloths, one [291] fastened under the armpits and the other over one shoulder and knotted on the chest, were carefully draped and arranged. If she walked to another compound or out of the village on the road, or walked or danced in any ceremony, [516] her dignity of bearing and poise of head was always marked. She did not hurry, but, as the Ngoni said, 'she walked strongly'. A government official passing an octogenarian [481] Ngoni princess on the road stopped and offered her a lift in his car. She looked him up and down and said: 'Thank you, young man. I can still walk.'

577 602 Many references have been made already to the relationship between a wife and her husband, and between a wife, especially a young one, and her husband's relatives. The keynotes of this relationship were devotion to her husband, respect for his relatives, and circumspection in her relations with her co-wives and with her non-Ngoni helpers. Jealousy between co-wives was recognized by the Ngoni but not condoned, and the young wife at marriage was warned by her own family against quarrelling with anyone, co-wives, helpers or in-laws, though the last was almost unthinkable.

577 592 Competence in household management, being a successful 'châtelaine', made many demands on a Ngoni woman if she were to live up to what was considered an ideal house-

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Succession to office within this system was from a man to his eldest son by his great wife. A man inherited from his father not only his father's dependents but also his father's political superiors. The segments of the system, although some of them had special names, could all be referred to by the name of the person in charge of each segment. The heir succeeded to the name of his father and to responsibility for the segment named after his father. New people came into the system in two ways: by birth and by capture. Captives were placed in the system by decree of the Paramount Chief and his regional governors. The function of marriage was, in this context, to locate children in the system unambiguously and uniquely.

Two systems of relationships set up ties which cut across the lines of the residential system. These were the military regimental system of age-sets and the bilateral kinship system. In this paper we shall be concerned only incidentally with the regimental system, in so far as it directly affected marriage. We are, however, concerned with the kinship system, and in particular with the relationship of husband and wife. By careful choice of wives for himself and his sons a man ensured that his own group of agnates was linked to many other agnatic groups by bonds of affinity and, in the next generation, of matrilateral kinship.

It is from this point of view that we can best approach the analysis of marriage as it was in 'the time of peace'. Marriage arrangements then worked in conjunction with the residential system which is now in decay and it is not surprising that the replacement of the old system by a new one has been accompanied by changes in the kinds of marriage entered into by Ngoni men and women.

2. *Fidelity and fertility*

The old Ngoni residential system had much in common with the Zulu and Swazi systems and there was much in common in the realm of marriage. Marriage involved a permanent transfer of the fertility of the woman to the man's group. The children of a man's wife fell entirely within his own segment of the system, so that political ties became coincident with lineage ties. But while marriage secured for a man legitimate descendents with whom to people his own segment, it also established ties of affection and obligation which cut across the cleavage lines of the residential system. A man and his affines were linked in a specific relationship, entailing definite rights in division in the marriage, validated by the transfer of cattle and made permanent by the birth of children. The rites of marriage affirmed the transfer of the woman's fertility, the agnatic affiliation of her children, and the rights and obligations of affines towards one another. This pattern is common to many peoples organized patrilineally. Nevertheless, some of the characteristics of highly developed agnatic systems, such as ghost marriage, the marriage of wives by a woman, and the marriage of a queen with cattle contributed by the whole nation, were not found among the Ngoni.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

woman, who was sometimes a younger sister or a junior father's daughter. This woman then became a linked co-wife (*nukawa*)[1] subordinate to her barren sister. If the linked wife was also barren then the man could demand another one. The barren woman was never sent back to her own relatives but continued to live with her husband. Children of the linked wife were allocated to her and she became responsible for their upbringing. Similarly if a wife died before she had borne a child a linked co-wife replaced her.

If the man was sterile he used to arrange for a friend to sleep secretly with his wife so that she should conceive. The friend was rewarded with a beast after a child had been born but the reason for making the reward was kept secret. If a *woodraiser* was caught he was killed for committing adultery, despite the fact of his having been called in by the husband.[2]

As well as being fertile, wives were expected to be chaste. On this point the evidence is clear. Wiese states that adulterers were always killed;[3] all subsequent writers have agreed with him. I was told that if the woman's husband was not an important person he was sometimes placated with a present of cattle. If the husband persisted in referring the matter to the chief the senior lieutenants of the chief might intercede on his behalf, if this was the man's first offence. Otherwise the man and the woman were both killed by one of the senior lieutenants.

The approved mode of behaviour for women was chastity before marriage, submission in the choice of husband, and fertility and fidelity in marriage. These obligations were clear-cut and definite and of universal applicability. The obligations of affines towards one another were not so straightforward, and their fulfilment was a process marked by ritual transfers of cattle and carefully prescribed modes of behaviour. In particular the relationship of a man to his wife's mother was allowed progressively from one of strict avoidance to openly expressed friendliness. The stages in the process represented the gradual acceptance of the man into the family of his wife's parents as a son-in-law, the father of their daughter's children.

Marriage was entered into without compulsion on either side, but the right to terminate it was held in the man's group alone. A woman could not on any ground secure a divorce. All my informants agreed on this point. A man could divorce his wife at any time by sending her back to her own kinsfolk, giving her a small present as an indication that he had divorced her. If he had offered bridewealth for her, her kinsfolk were under an obligation to provide him with a

[1] Read, in her 'blood ends', p. 19 translates this word (*ukhawa*) as 'substitute'. Lancaster, 'Tentative chronology', p. 70, gives the word as *nukawa*. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 39 translates the Swazi word *umkati* as 'subordinate co-wife'. I have chosen the translation 'linked co-wife' as there are other kinds of subordinate co-wife who are not sororal, and some sororal are not substitutes.

[2] See below, p. 58.

[3] Wiese, *op. cit.* 'Expedition . . .', p. 451, and 'Geschichte . . .', pp. 189-90.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Wiese suggests that the woman only gradually transferred her place of residence from her father's village to that of her husband.[1] If the husband and wife quarrelled, the woman ran away to her father's village for protection, and had to be persuaded to return by her husband. It is difficult to find out if there was any obligation on the man to labour for his father-in-law. Such an obligation exists to-day, but informants like to maintain that in the past the Ngoni never troubled themselves with agriculture, but lived entirely on beer, meat, and raided crops. But we know from contemporary writers that they did have gardens, although they may perhaps have been cultivated only by recent captives and by women.

An important obligation on the man was to avoid his wife's mother. He did not speak to her, went off into the bush if he met her on a path, and did not pass in front of her hut. With his father-in-law he was formal and reserved, but he did speak to him. These patterns were established at betrothal, and with the passage of years were gradually set aside. The final ceremony in which the man ate with his mother-in-law was the social recognition of his successful performance of the role of son-in-law and of husband to their daughter. Even after this ceremony he could not sit on the same mat as his mother-in-law. The position of the woman in respect to her parents-in-law was much easier, and she did not avoid them or their hut.

As a result of these formal and informal modes of interaction between the man's group and the woman's group, links of affinity were established which cut across the residential system, with its chains of authority and responsibility, superordination and subordination. The common interest of persons bound together by these links was the success of the marriage, and the well-being of the children. A quarrel between a man and his wife led to processes of discussion, deliberation and conciliation involving the two groups. The children of the marriage grew up knowing not only where they belonged politically, but also where they were welcome as sister's sons and daughter's sons. Some children were sent to the father's mother to be reared, some to the mother's mother. The pregnancies of the woman were reported to her own relatives as well as to her husband's.

It is impossible to tell to what extent people consciously planned their marriages and the marriages of their children with the object of ramifying their affinal ties. But we do know that a wife who had been brought from a long way off was regarded more highly than one who came from the same village as her husband, and that a woman who married her cross-cousin was, other things being equal, lower in status than her husband's unrelated other wives. These gradations in status suggest that the value of a marriage which established a link between a man and some hitherto unconnected

[1] Wiese, *op. cit.* 'Expedition . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', pp. 191-2.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

segment of the residential system was recognised and institutionalised. Furthermore, it is in line with this thesis that, in arranging the marriage of recent captives, no great attention was paid to the establishment of farflung affinal links. Frequently a man and a woman who had been allocated to the same captor, and whom they both addressed as 'father', married one another on his instructions. Payments made in these marriages were small or non-existent. Recent captives were too low in the hierarchical structure to be concerned about reinforcing their position by horizontal ties. Their ambitions were directed to securing promotion by becoming lieutenants of their captors.

5. Autonomy of marriage

The pattern of segmentation of the residential system was continually changing. In part this was due to proliferation downwards, that is, by the process of increasing segmentation between brothers and between fathers' sons. In addition to this process political promotion and death in war altered the relative position of the segments associated with particular people. Marriage itself was a social process which, in so far as the relationship between man and wife was concerned, did not react directly on the residential system. This system was based on patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence and the movements of women, except at the level of the queens, were from one point of view irrelevant to the system. It was the grouping of children round their mother, in contrast to their father's children by other wives, which related the marriages of one generation to the patterns of segmentation of the next. A woman with no children in her house, whether her status was high or low, was structurally irrelevant to the residential system.

Marriage was also largely independent of the central government. Warfare, not domesticity, was the right and proper occupation of young men, and the age at which men married for the first time was probably about thirty. Informants all stressed that in the old days first marriage took place at later ages for both men and women than it does now. Wiese implies that girls were married any time after puberty,[29] but my informants stated that girls did not usually marry until they were aged about twenty to twenty-five. Men and women were organised into parallel age-sets, usually referred to as regiments, and corresponding regiments used to dance and frolic together. Sometimes a man took a wife from the regiment corresponding to his own, but there does not seem to have been any positive obligation to do so. Particular regiments were not prevented from marrying, as among the Zulu, and all the tales of the Paramount Chief intervening in the affairs of warriors are phrased in terms of the chief instructing a laggard to find himself a wife when all his age mates had already married. The chief did however interfere

[29] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expedition . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Maravi FR4

came. Others followed maternal links or were attracted to the district messengers, the newly-created political agents of the White Administration. About 1912 the Administration adopted a policy of decreasing the number of distinct villages and effected amalgamations between villages which had nothing at all in common except spatial proximity. Later still, from about 1920 onwards, new immigrants began to enter the area from the surrounding Cewa tribe in the face of alienation of land to Whites.

These villages became the basic local administrative units. Men were identified in terms of their tribe, their chief, and their village. To this extent the new village inherited the political functions of the old. But men, instead of being fixed in their allegiance, moved from village to village seeking good land for their gardens and freedom from quarrels. The proliferation of villages was to some extent controlled by the Administration, so that if a man quarrelled with his elder brother he could no longer easily set up a village of his own. Instead he sought refuge with his maternal or affinal kin, registered himself in their village, and became for some purposes at least subordinate to the headman of that village. A man's political position was determined by where he had decided to live, whereas under the old system he had had to live where he belonged politically. The whole nature of affinal and maternal ties shifted so that in some instances they became more important than the ties of paternal kinship.

2. Rival tribes

The values of Ngoni life were in the old days held in conscious opposition to those of the tribes with whom they fought. All the later captives came from matrilineal uxorilocal tribes, who made only token transfers at marriage, and who married at an earlier age than did the military Ngoni. They did not take so severe a view of adultery, and for girls copulation at puberty was obligatory. Captives who had been brought up in this tradition were in the old days forcibly required to adopt the Ngoni way of life, and indeed it seems likely that to some extent they did so willingly as part of the process by which they transferred themselves in allegiance from one group to the other. After 1898 the central government of the Ngoni lost much of its power and it was no longer able to enforce conformity to Ngoni standards. Ngoni marriage payments had been made in cattle, and the looting of cattle made it more difficult to maintain these payments. The example provided by the adjacent Cewa chiefdoms reinforced the tendency to depart from the modes of behaviour of the past. Furthermore, groups of Cewa entered Ngoni country after 1898, as we have already noted, and these people had never been indoctrinated with Ngoni beliefs and values. In addition, many individuals followed their captured relatives and joined them where they were living in Ngoni country. To-day some villages, although under Ngoni chiefs, have matrilineal succession, dance

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Maravi FR4
Wisa FR5

her by her parents, but the general rule is that people seek their own partners. Certain rules have to be considered by whoever is trying to arrange the match. These determine which marriages are regarded as incestuous, and which marriages are preferred. The kinship relationship, age, ethnic group, and religion of the partner all have to be considered. With the passing of the regimental system, considerations of State no longer affect choice of marriage partner, except for near relatives of the chiefs.

A man may not marry anyone whom he addresses with a kinship term belonging to the first ascending or the first descending generation. This prohibits marriage between ego and his *mothers, fathers, mothers, brothers, affines,* and *children.*[1] In his own generation he cannot marry his *child's parents-in-law* and he cannot marry any *sibling* who is not a *cross-cousin.* In the second ascending and descending generation a man may address his female *grandparent* and his female *grandchild* as *wife,* and he can, to a slight extent, joke and refer in general terms to sexual activities in their presence. But Ngoni regard it as a typical Cewa custom for a man actually to marry his female *grandchild,* and do not approve of such marriages among their own people. A man may fondle the breasts of his grandmother and suggest in the company of others at a beer drink that his granddaughter should marry him, but that is as far as this joking goes.

A man is entitled, and to some extent expected, to flirt with his female *cross-cousins.* We have noted above that the Ngoni peoples from whom the leaders of the Ngoni kingdom were drawn did not allow cross-cousin marriage. By contrast the Cewa and Wisa peoples, who were captured in large numbers from about 1870 on, came from societies in which local organization was based on bilateral intra-village cross-cousin marriage. In villages where there are now many people claiming Cewa and Wisa descent there are many instances of cross-cousin marriage. This form of marriage is by no means confined to people of low ethnic status, and even the Paramount Chief has married classificatory cross-cousins. In the aristocratic families it is sometimes suggested that an important man might marry a cross-cousin while still young and unable to muster a large marriage payment and then later marry an unrelated woman as his great wife. No distinction is made between marriage with father's sister's daughter and with mother's brother's daughter. The somewhat equivocal attitude towards cross-cousin marriage is seen in the conflicting statements of informants about payments in cross-cousin marriages. Some say that no payments ought to be made, for are they not all one family (*banja*). If payments were made it would mean that the family had split. Others say that payments can and ought to be made and that provided the cross-

[1] For the definition of these terms, see Barnes, *op. cit.* pp. 119 ff.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

[P.58]

CHAPTER IV

KINSFOLK, AFFINES AND NEIGHBOURS

1. The setting of marriage

When a man marries he acquires not only a wife but also affinal relatives. His kinsfolk become her affines and both groups of relatives become kin of the children of the marriage. Husband and wife do not exist in isolation but are the centre of a network of relationships by which one group is articulated with the other. The common interest of the two groups is in the well-being of the couple and of the family which they found. This is true of all societies but among the Ngoni the relatives of a married couple play a more important part in the marriage than they do, for example, in Western society. The importance of the kin is increased by the custom of sending children away to live with their grandparents as soon as they have been weaned, and by the fact that husband and wife do not set up their residence entirely on their own but follow their relatives and live in close proximity to one or more of them. We have said that in the old days the elementary family did not emerge as an important grouping in society. This proposition is still true to-day, although our grounds for making it have shifted somewhat. In the towns the old pattern of kinship cannot operate and husband and wife live their lives much more as an isolated pair, cut off from their kin and alone responsible for their children. But in villages neighbours are kinsmen and a quarrel between man and wife brings kinsfolk from all around seeking to establish the rights and wrongs of the quarrel and to effect reconciliation. Many children are not sent to live with their grandparents, but even they grow up with their age-mates in the village, are fed by many different women, sleep in different huts, and visit to and fro with their relatives in other villages. The difficulties of rearing children in the towns have led to the rise of a new pattern in which children born in Southern Rhodesia are brought back hundreds of miles to the village to be cared for by rural kinsfolk. The quarrels of spouses in the towns are referred home to the village for discussion.

It is the kinsfolk of the pair who are most directly concerned with their marriage, but there are other persons and groups who are also interested. In the village the headman and his lieutenants, even if they are not close kinsmen of one of the spouses, have an interest in the good behaviour of the couple, and they too may intervene in a quarrel. They participate in the ceremonials of marriage, and may receive part of the meat and beer given by one side to the other. Beyond the village the Native Courts deal to a great extent with

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Where a woman has already troubled her relatives by her adultery, they may try to avoid further expense by refusing the legalisation payment offered for her.

Case history 7

Rachel had had two husbands and had been divorced from them both. She had also lived with a White for some years. In 1948 she began to live with Enos, who already had three wives. In 1949 Enos approached an important man in Rachel's village and asked him to act as intermediary as he wished to offer the legalisation payment to Rachel's brother. This man refused to do so, and in the end Enos approached his brother-in-law himself. The brother-in-law said that he had known his sister Rachel a long time and she was just a prostitute. He would not take the money for her. Enos said he would speak to his wife and ask her to change her character. Eventually the brother-in-law agreed to accept the thirty shillings offered.

Although the kinsfolk of the man or woman can exercise social pressure to prevent a marriage it is difficult for them to force a girl to marry against her will, and impossible in the case of a man. We have noted that in the old days, according to informants, people married whom they were told and did not refuse. Even if this was ever true, it is true no longer. A man can move off to the towns in the face of pressure and a woman can always run away to other relatives if her parents are insistent on an unwanted marriage. The Administration does not allow girls to be married against their will, but I do not know of any recent instance in which it has intervened on this issue. A girl's relatives can show their anger by abusing her and by scaring off her own preferred mate, but they cannot detain her against her will and they cannot force her to go through the ceremonies of marriage. They cannot appeal to the court to punish the girl for disobedience.

In some instances pressure is put on a man by a woman's kin to force him into marrying her. If a woman bears a pre-marital child, and it is known that the genitor is an important man or chief, her kinsfolk begin to adopt towards the genitor's family the patterns of respect and avoidance which would be appropriate if he were their affine. This procedure may be adopted although it is plain to people in general that the genitor has no intention of marrying the woman. If it is unsuccessful in forcing the hand of the genitor, the formal attitudes of the woman's kinsfolk come to be generally ridiculed and they abandon the pretence.

So far we have considered only the attitude of kinsfolk towards a proposed marriage and the legalization payment associated with it. The factors influencing the acceptance or refusal of bridewealth are different. Bridewealth, when offered, is not often refused. Table V shows that in our sample this happened in only one out of 200 marriages. We must remember that bridewealth is paid only in about four per cent of all marriages, and that a man is usually on good terms with his affines and has lived in peace for many years with his wife before he offers it. A youngish man may seek the

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

pooling payment through which they can attempt to control the relationship between the couple. Yet both groups of kin are interested in the successful outcome of the marriage, and therefore attempt to influence the choice of marriage partner.

3. Formal interaction

In the formal negotiations that precede a marriage, and in the ceremonies that mark its stages of development, the kinsfolk are always involved. The married couple depend on their kin for economic assistance, and are under obligations to help their kin. The place of residence of the couple is determined by the disposition of their kin in different villages. If the man is a labour migrant his interests are represented by his rural kinsfolk. In general it is the fathers of the couple who are most directly concerned, if they are available, but in all Ngoni situations in which a man (or woman) appeals to his kin for support there are no hard and fast rules about the genealogical positions his supporters should occupy. If a man's father is old he turns to his elder brother. If his genealogically close kinsmen live far away, he turns to those who live nearer although they may be further removed from him in genealogical terms. If there is no male kinsman available he may seek the support of an old kinswoman.

The formal situations which require the co-operation of kinsfolk are the matchmaking, the gall bladder ceremony (which we may perhaps regard as the wedding), the ceremony of first cooking, the bowing party, the announcement of first pregnancy, the carrying of beer and the entry into the wife's mother's hut. Betrothal is another formal situation requiring the presence of the woman's kin, but as nowadays very few girls are betrothed, we shall omit this from our analysis. It will be recalled that even in the old days betrothal applied only to girls under puberty and that a girl who reached puberty without becoming betrothed proceeded to marriage without passing through any intermediate stage. The matchmaking, at which the marriage is arranged, is carried on in a formal manner but there is little ceremonial. The carrying of beer is a visit from one group to the other that can be repeated as many times as they wish, but all the other ceremonies occur but once in a marriage, if they occur at all. The bowing party has a certain economic value but the other ceremonies are largely symbolic in content. As with the marriage payments, the marriage ceremonials can all be dispensed with and yet there be a marriage which to all intents and purposes is valid. What cannot be omitted so easily from a marriage are the patterns of respect and avoidance between the couple and their affines, particularly between a man and his wife's mother. Even here, however, there is some variation in practice.

The usual procedure in matchmaking is that first the man and the woman agree between themselves that they will get married. They reach this agreement in secret without reference to their kinsfolk

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Mpezeni

depends as much on the compliance of the man as on the insistence of his father-in-law.

A payment [19] of about five shillings is sometimes made by a man to his wife's father enabling him to take his wife to his own village. This is made either at the beginning of the marriage or after one or two years of uxorilocal residence, but in some marriages the payment is never made at all, and in some villages even the vernacular term is unknown. In those villages where the payment is recognised there is no consensus of opinion as to the rights granted by it. Some people hold that the payment is equivalent to a year or two of uxorilocal residence, and that, therefore, the money should be offered when the marriage is arranged, so that it may be begun virilocally. They go on to say that when a man has completed his period of uxorilocal residence, he is free to take his wife to his own village without making this payment. Other people say that a man ought to remain living uxorilocally until he makes this payment, which should therefore be done a year or so after marriage, or at some time later when the man wishes to move. Where the payment is not recognized, people either say that a man ought to live uxorilocally for a while and cannot buy himself out of this obligation, or else assert that the Ngoni, unlike the Cewa, do not marry uxorilocally and that the legalization payment allows a man to take a bride to his village as soon as he chooses. There is a wide variation in the norms held, or at least expressed, on this matter and an equally wide variation in actual behaviour. Men select their course of action by reference to the total situation in which they find themselves when they marry. A man may try to enforce one rule on one son-in-law and another rule on another. I observed one extreme case in which a man allowed one of his daughters, married to a man from her own village, to move to her husband's cluster after only a few months of uxorilocal residence in his own cluster. At the same time he would not allow another daughter to move to her husband's village after four years of uxorilocal residence, despite the offer of ten shillings payment to him. He approved of the first son-in-law while disliking the second, who had failed to report to him when his daughter first became pregnant.

We have talked of the man's village and the woman's village. It is perhaps necessary to stress that what is meant by, say, the man's village is a village to which the man's ties are stronger than those of his wife. It is likely to be a village where some relative of his is living, but the relative may be his father or his mother or his father's mother or his mother's father or some more distant connexion. Sometimes a man goes to live in his first wife's village and then brings in his second wife. The second wife is then said to be living virilocally, in the village of her husband rather than in her own, although the man is himself living in his first wife's village.

[19] Nkhoholo. Cf. Barnes, op. cit. p. 220

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

that is, in uxorilocal marriage. In the man's village there are likely to be relatives of his wife already established, but it is she who is said to 'follow' her husband to the village and not he who 'follows' her, since his ties to the village, and to the cluster in the village within which they set up their household, are stronger than hers. Similarly a man may have relatives of his own living in his wife's village and yet be spoken of as living uxorilocally. If a woman's father is living in her village, he will be the focus of her husband's obligations. But if he lives a long way away and the woman has been dependent on her grandparents, or on her mother's brother, then it is they who will act towards her husband to some extent in the role of substitute parents-in-law. However, a man does not avoid his substitute mother-in-law as thoroughly as he would his wife's own mother.

The obligation on a man to help his wife's parents in their garden is expressed in two ways. Once during the marriage the man must provide a party of people to hoe for the greater part of one day in his wife's mother's garden. He must also be prepared to work in this garden from time to time when he is called upon, and his wife may work with him. While the labour given by the man and his wife is useful labour, the work done by the hoeing party is only partly useful and may do more damage than good. The procedure is that the man, or a relative of his, tells his father-in-law that he proposes to bring a party to hoe on such-and-such a day. By agreeing to this the father-in-law tacitly agrees also to provide the party with beer and presents. On the appointed day, early in the morning, the party arrives and begins work. When the father-in-law thinks the work has gone on long enough, he sends an intermediary to offer a present to the leader of the hoers. If the present is considered sufficient the party stops hoeing and returns to the father-in-law's village. If not, it continues to hoe with renewed vigour. At intervals the father-in-law sends intermediaries with higher and higher offers until at last the hoers are satisfied or exhausted and they come into the village to collect their presents and beer. As often as not the hoers try to force the father-in-law to offer a present at the limit of his resources, for example a beast, and, as the offers mount, the workers become more and more excited and their hoeing less and less useful. At the end of a day, with the light failing, physically exhausted hoers begin to root up the maize with the weeds, and the mother-in-law's garden may be seriously damaged. If the father-in-law is obstinate and does not offer them what they want the hoers may spend the night sleeping out in the garden. By the next morning everyone is too tired to continue the matter further, and the party disperses.[2]

This sort of hoeing party may not facilitate the cultivation of good maize but it is of great significance to the married couple and the

[2] See Appendix III for an account of two of these parties.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

her husband's village, the occasion must be recognized in a more elaborate manner. Her husband or his relatives buy her a new cloth. Wearing this cloth she stands at the door of her husband's hut, and is undressed by her husband's grandmother. The old woman rubs castor oil on her abdomen and dresses her again. A small girl from her husband's kin goes with her to her own village, and their arrival there, with the woman dressed in her new cloth, indicates formally to her parents that she is pregnant. They stay at the woman's village for about a week, and then return to her husband's village.[1] Her parents have thus been made socially aware of her pregnancy, and the man can legitimately look to them for help if she becomes ill or fractious.

If the woman does die in childbirth, her husband has to offer a beast to her parents even though they were told of her pregnancy.[2] The husband may confess to adultery when called upon to do so by the midwife, but this does not absolve him from the obligation to pay the beast. Confession absolves him from the charge of having caused the death of his wife by his careless behaviour, but he must still recompense his parents-in-law for the death of their daughter. It is recognized that a woman may die in childbirth despite the absence of adultery during pregnancy or despite full confession of adultery by both the woman and her husband. She dies just because God lets her die, and not because of any human misconduct. Yet she reaches the situation in which there is the danger of death because of her position as the wife of her husband. It is the 'work' of married women to bear children, and it is the 'work' of the husband if his wife dies in childbirth to offer a beast to her parents so that they may mourn their daughter.

5. Quarrels

We see then that a woman is not severed utterly from her own group when she marries, but that her kinsfolk retain an interest in her welfare and have certain rights in her and in her husband. The recognition of these rights by their son-in-law increases his esteem in their eyes, and enables him to appeal to them with confidence when he needs their support. The common interest of all is in the successful maintenance of the marriage, and the mutual recognition of rights and fulfilment of obligations consolidate the social relationships established between people related by marriage. Quarrels threaten the continued existence of the marriage, and it is therefore in the common interest that they should be settled as expeditiously as possible. The intervention of affines in a personal quarrel between husband and wife is characteristic of a system in which most neighbours are kinsfolk and in which the spatial concentration of people into compact villages, where abuse shouted at one

[1] This ceremony is called *ngoyi*, which means 'breast-cloth' in Ngoni.
[2] See above, pp. 200.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

end of the village can be heard at the other, ensures that all quarrels soon become public knowledge. The quarrels of any members of the village are known to, and in greater or lesser degree are the concern of, everyone else in the village. Beyond the confines of the village, kinsfolk living in neighbouring villages can soon be called in and in any case soon come to hear of a serious dispute. In a quarrel between man and wife there are certain restrictions on the extent to which affines can intervene, and there are certain regularities in the way in which they are brought into the ambit of the quarrel. 578 602

When a woman has a serious quarrel with her husband, she runs away. If the couple are living uxorilocally she may not go very far, and may take shelter with a friend or relative at the other end of the village but the consequences are much the same as if she had gone off to a kinsman several miles away. As a woman flees from the anger of one relative by seeking refuge with another or with her affines, so she flees from her husband to the shelter of a kinsman or kinswoman. Occasionally a woman will go to someone to whom she is bound only by bonds of quasi-kinship, as for example to a former playmate or school friend whom she addresses by a kinship term, but this is not common. If her husband makes no effort to persuade her to return, it is assumed that he does not want her back and that he is trying to trap her into committing adultery. A woman can sue for divorce if her husband has allowed her to stay away after a quarrel and has not tried to get her back again. [586]

Case history 8

Abner was married to Esther and had paid the legalisation payment. Abner suspected her of copulating with another man in the village and fought her. He then told her he was contemplating taking another wife. Esther ran off to her father's village about eight miles away and stayed there five months. Abner did not come to see her and she complained to the court. Abner was asked in court why he did not go to visit Esther and replied that he had had no time to do so as he had been ill. Esther said that Abner always suspected her of being a prostitute, but she wanted Abner as her husband; the trouble was that Abner did not want her or else he would have followed her to her village. The court agreed that Abner did not want Esther as a wife and was merely setting a trap for her, hoping to get damages for adultery when Esther had been left alone a long time. Abner was ordered to divorce his wife. He refused to do so, saying that he still liked her. Esther said that if Abner still wanted her he must come and live with her in her father's village where her father could see how he looked after her. Abner refused to go and live there. The court then divorced Esther without awarding any damages to Abner.

The correct behaviour for a husband when he finds that his wife has run away is to inquire from her friends in the village where she has gone, and then to hurry after her himself. It would not be considered right for him to send an intermediary; he must himself go and apologise. Arriving at the hut of the relative with whom his wife is sheltering, he does not speak to his wife but first asks the relative to intervede with her. They discuss the cause of the quarrel, and if it can be settled easily, as for instance when the man admits

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

that he was drunk when he quarrelled with his wife and did not mean what he said, the woman may agree to return. If she is adamant, or if a serious issue such as cruelty or adultery is involved, a formal discussion is held in the village of one or the other. Relatives come from both sides and a man of senior status convenes the meeting.[18] Sometimes it may be agreed that the offending spouse must pay nominal damages to the other. The usual procedure is to offer a chicken to the other, but sometimes a few shillings are given instead. If agreement cannot be reached at a meeting like this, the matter can either be referred to the court, or else the issue of the quarrel may be left unresolved in the hope that at some later date a solution may be possible. While the initiative in holding a village meeting lies with the senior relatives of the couple, the only people who can take the matter to the court are the couple themselves. A father may sometimes handle the formalities of laying a case against his son-in-law on his daughter's behalf but it would be difficult for him to do so without her co-operation, and, on the man's side, it is only he and not his father or brother who can effectively sue his wife.

The interests of the two groups of relatives are centred on the successful maintenance of the marriage. It is considered more important that people should live together in peace without quarrelling than that the exact rights of one side or the other, even where these rights can be defined precisely, should be upheld. A man who commits adultery may be censured by his father, who will perhaps refuse to speak to his son if he thinks that the stability of his son's marriage is threatened, even though it is admitted that the man's wife has no legal right to object to her husband's adultery. When there has been a quarrel people do not rush to hold a village meeting since, by doing so, the existence of the quarrel is formally recognized and its seriousness increased. It is better if possible to get the couple to 'change their character', that is, to become reconciled to each other on their own account. Until the woman's sudden departure indicates to the world that they have quarrelled, relatives are reluctant to interfere between man and wife. People gossip about the quarrels of married couples, but even their close kinsmen will hedge and say that these affairs are not their responsibility if pressed for an opinion. The action of the wife in running away is the mechanism by which she begins her appeal to her relatives for support, and she carries it a stage further by refusing to accept her husband's apologies. Finally if the settlement proposed at the meeting is not acceptable she appeals to the court. Men do not run away to their kinsmen and do not rely on relatives to the same extent as do their wives. Yet a man can if he wishes

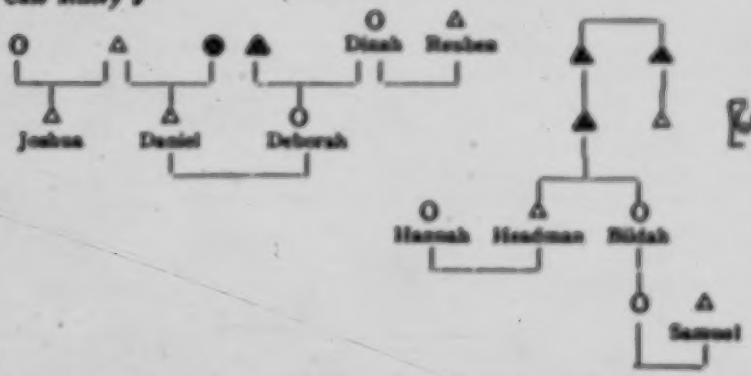
[18] *Tanda*. This word is used of any formal meeting in a village to settle a quarrel, matrimonial or otherwise, before the issue is referred to the court. *Cf.* Nsenga *ku-tandala*, to talk or discuss.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

precipitate an open quarrel by staying away from his wife, by eating elsewhere or by threatening divorce. Fights in the village, provided the parties concerned do not hurry off to court, are dealt with first at a village meeting, and even where the combatants are not man and wife, the elucidation of the cause of the fight may bring to light a latent marital quarrel which must then be dealt with by the relatives. Accusations of adultery must be denied, and a woman may call in her relatives to protect her from the slander of a jealous woman.

The processes by which a quarrel between man and wife comes to light, and the attempts of kinsfolk to resolve the quarrel, are well illustrated by the following account of an adulterous wife.

Case history 9



Daniel was a labour migrant in Southern Rhodesia and his wife Deborah was living meanwhile in the village of her mother's husband Reuben. The headman of this village had himself returned from the railway line a year previously. At a beer party Deborah quarrelled with Hannah the headman's wife, who accused Deborah of sleeping with the headman and who started to fight her. A meeting was held in the village to settle the affair. Deborah denied that she had ever slept with the headman and the headman denied that he had ever slept with her. Hannah retorted that she did not like to see her husband running after other women and always talking to Deborah. Reuben and a neighbour of his said that they could say nothing in the matter as Deborah was a married woman, and they called on Joshua, who was Daniel's father's son, to speak. He had come from his own village to attend the meeting. Joshua said that Hannah had not actually caught Deborah sleeping with her husband the headman, and that therefore Hannah had done wrong in accusing Deborah without good reason. Hannah had also erred in making accusations that would make Deborah's brothers-in-law think that Deborah was committing adultery. The headman had also erred and should stop talking to Deborah, or else the brothers-in-law of Deborah would take him to court for drinking beer at night with Deborah, who was a married woman.

Hannah then admitted that she had done wrong in fighting Deborah. Another man in the village, Samuel, the headman's sister's daughter's husband, spoke, and said that Hannah must offer a chicken to Deborah because if Hannah had really known that Deborah was sleeping with the headman, surely she would have seen that Deborah was taken to court.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

578
402
159

Hannah sent her son to catch a chicken, which was put at the feet of Samuel and a lieutenant of the village, who called on Deborah to accept it. Deborah was stopped from doing so by Reuben, who said that the village was now a land village since the headmen had returned to it, and that he did not want his daughter to accept the chicken. The chicken was released, and the meeting broke up. Reuben subsequently explained his action by saying that if he had let Deborah take the chicken, there would be hatred between Deborah and Hannah, and more quarrels would ensue. People would quarrel in the village just to get chickens.

Two months later Daniel returned from Southern Rhodesia, and Deborah went back to Daniel's village to live with him there. Soon he quarrelled with her, and accused her of committing adultery while he was away. A meeting was held at the house of Daniel's father to deal with the quarrel. Daniel said that he had brought back with him medicine which he had put under Deborah's pillow while she was asleep. Under the influence of the medicine Deborah talked in her sleep and disclosed the names of the men with whom she had slept while Daniel had been away. Daniel said that he did not like to take these men to court on the evidence of this medicine alone. Reuben, who had been called from his village to attend the meeting, said that the matter was not one in which he could act and it was up to Daniel to decide what he wanted to do, as Deborah was his wife. Daniel's father said that as Deborah had children by Daniel she ought to be forgiven and warned not to do it again. The headman of Daniel's village observed that women had been committing adultery long before there was any labour migration, and that as this was Deborah's first offence she should just be warned. Daniel said that Deborah should be warned not in his village but in her own village, and that she should be warned not by himself or his father but by her father Reuben. Daniel wrote down the names of the people he had heard mentioned by Deborah, but he did not show this list at the meeting. An informant who claimed that he saw the list said that it contained, among others, the name of the headman of Reuben's village.

A month later a meeting was held in Reuben's village to continue the discussion. Some of the important people in the village attended, but not the headman or his lieutenant. This commission was explained by Reuben as being because all the people concerned were Christians and they must decide it among themselves without reference to the headmen, a pagan. Daniel's father opened the discussions by saying that Daniel wanted to know about the adulteries of Deborah while he was away in Southern Rhodesia. Daniel then said that he wanted to take to court the people who had slept with his wife. He had found medicines in the house on his return, and these he produced as evidence. He said he had asked his wife what sort of medicines these were, and at first she had refused to tell him. He had pressed her and she had then said that some were medicines she had got from people in another country for headache, and that others were roots of love medicine she had got from other women in the village. Daniel said he did not believe his wife when she told him this, as a woman would not make love medicine if her husband were away. He had found other medicines hidden in the roof of the storehouse which Deborah had refused to explain to him.

Deborah spoke and said that she admitted sleeping with two men, Gideon and Balaam. (They were both men from other villages.) Another man from the village, the headman's father's brother's son, who had been invited to the meeting (but who was not a Christian) said that these people Gideon and Balaam ought to be taken to court as Daniel had suggested, for a case like this could not be settled in the village.

Daniel then went on to say that he thought his wife was pregnant and he wanted to know who had impregnated her. Deborah said that she was sure it was Gideon and Balaam who had made her pregnant. Daniel's father remarked that they had best wait before bringing a case against

4: Barnes E-S (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

Gideon as Gideon's village was on the point of moving from one county to another and they wanted to begin the case in the right court.

Dinah, Deborah's mother, addressed her daughter:

'My daughter, ever since I married my husband, I have never committed adultery with anyone who was not my husband, and I have never asked anyone to give me medicines so that Reuben would love me. My husband loves me because I obey him, and he looks after me well. In addition he looks after you, who are not his real daughter. Believe my words, when Reuben dies, you will not find me married to such a good husband who can look after me and all my children. I used to tell you not to drink beer all night long because your husband was away working. You did not obey me, and see now you have done wrong to both parents, your own parents and the parents of your husband. We will regard you as a bad child who has not been well instructed; and the parents of your husband will regard us as bad people for not instructing you well. Now it is up to you because you are a fully grown person.'

Daniel's father said that the man who had made Deborah pregnant would be punished by the court, and that now Daniel and Deborah must be told to live in peace. Daniel said that he had nothing more to say as the people who had been sleeping with his wife had been identified. He would take them to court and would live peacefully with his wife. The meeting then ended.

Two months later Daniel took Hebron to court, and Deborah and Hebron were each ordered to pay Daniel thirty shillings damages.

We see in this account the constant interest of the kindfolk in maintaining the marriage. Divorce was never mentioned. Instead, Deborah was told to change her ways. Her father-in-law argued that she should be forgiven as she had already borne children to Daniel. Her mother's husband, although he was more diffident about the matter than if she had been his own daughter, tried to prevent her quarrel with Hannah from worsening when he prevented her taking the chicken offered her. Although Reuben was only her step-father Daniel considered him, rather than his own father, the proper person to deliver a reproof to Deborah.

Occasionally the aftermath of a marital quarrel is neither reconciliation nor divorce but a state of affairs we may call separation. If a wife runs away, or if her husband goes off to work and avoids her on his return, there may be attempts at reconciliation which may fail or there may even be no attempts. Not every woman in this position seeks divorce. Some still hope that their husbands will return, particularly if there are growing children to be cared for, while others may be bound by the rules of their religion against divorce. If a woman is old and does not wish to take another husband, she may be disinclined to take the trouble to obtain a divorce. It will be seen from Table IV that there are only a few women in this condition. They live with their own relatives and sometimes maintain indirect contact with their husbands through their children who visit back and forth. This category of separation is applicable only where the husband is living near his wife. If a man is in Southern Rhodesia and does not write, we cannot say whether or not he is, in this sense, separated from his wife. His

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS Mpezeni

and have the money to spare, they may buy her clothes. The only ways in which she can raise money easily for herself are by brewing beer, making pots, and working on the farms. To work on a farm she must, however, remove herself from the surveillance of her husband's kin, and unless she goes to join a contingent from their village working at the farm, they may think she is running away from them to seek a lover or new husband. We have seen, however, from Table XIV that significantly more wives whose husbands are away live unadulterously.

Many husbands write home, not only to their wives, and some remit postal orders and bank-notes. A man may get a friend who is returning from Southern Rhodesia to take home blankets and other bulky articles to be handed over to his wife. He may send presents like these direct to his wife or he may think it more prudent to send them to his father or brother and allow them to hand on to his wife as much as they think fit. The woman must then behave herself in the eyes of her affines if she wishes to receive her husband's presents. The acceptance of these gifts is taken as proof that the woman is still dependent on her husband however long he stays away. If the woman applies to the court for a divorce on the ground of desertion, the presents will be cited by her husband's kinsfolk as evidence that there is no intention on his part to desert. Gluckman reports from the Lozi that even if a man sends goods, after a statutory period the court will hold that 'a woman marries a man and not a blanket', that is, the husband must return to look after and sleep with his wife as well as send clothes to her. This argument is not used among the Ngoni. A woman who complains that she is not satisfied with marriage under these conditions is told to write to her absent husband and ask him for the fare to join him in Southern Rhodesia.

Case history 19

Saul was working in Nyasaland. He sent home to his wife 7s. 6d. for clothes. Later she wrote to him saying she wanted him to return. He sent her 15s., losing 2s. for clothes and 10s. less fare so that she could join him. She did not go and later went to the court complaining she had been deserted. Her husband's relatives argued, to the satisfaction of the court, that as her husband had sent her these gifts he was still taking care of her. The court dismissed her plea as she had refused to go to Nyasaland when the fare had been sent.

The husband's relatives try to watch carefully the movements of the woman so that they may prevent or at least report any adultery on her part. If they are in touch with the husband, they write to him should they suspect infidelity. Sometimes the husband ignores their letter, sometimes he gives them instructions how they should proceed in the matter, and sometimes he returns to the village to see for himself what is going on. He arrives without warning and hopes to catch his wife in the act. If all is well and he is satisfied that his wife has been faithful he usually goes back to work again.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS Mpezeni

Some men when they decide to return home from work in the normal course of events do not let their relatives know that they will be arriving. There are a variety of reasons for this, one being that the mystical hazards of the journey home are increased if a man's enemies know that it is taking place. There is also sometimes the desire to check on the fidelity of a wife. A chief returning from the railway line in 1947 reached Fort Jameson and sent on ahead a man to tell the people their chief had returned. A councillor who was with him remarked 'What sort of chief is this who gives his queens time to get back to their own houses? We ought to arrive suddenly and catch them all with their lovers.'

The woman's kin also wish to avoid trouble in her marriage and do what they can to prevent her committing adultery if they think that her husband is still treating her well. They talk to her about her obligations to her absent husband and if they think she cannot be trusted, one of them, perhaps the woman's mother, may sleep in the hut with her to see that she does not entertain lovers there. They may warn her that if she is taken to court for adultery they will not support her.

Thus we see that there is social prescription not only of the ways in which a man and his affines should behave towards each other, but also of the ways in which his affines should behave when the man is away. Similarly a woman and her affines interact in the light of their relationship not only when her husband is present but also when he has been absent for years. As a husband can exceed his rights over his wife, so can an affine go beyond what is tolerated while trying to safeguard the interests of an absent husband. The perseverance of some brothers of absent husbands, and the limitations imposed on their actions by public opinion, are recalled by a girls' song current in 1949.

I am wanting to go and sleep,
What stops me is something in the loins,
I go to the water, and the one who keeps on following comes,
He has exceeded his sibling-in-law-ship,[93]
He has dragged Eleni from the reeds.

Eleni is supposed to be the wife of a labour migrant. Her husband's brother follows her to the stream, where she has gone ostensibly to draw water, as he thinks that she is really going to meet a lover. She hides in the reeds and he drags her out. Such active intervention is inappropriate and dangerous for if there is a struggle the woman is likely to claim that the man was trying to rape her. The astute brother-in-law would have waited his time until he could catch her red-handed with her lover in a village.

It is never legitimate for a woman whose husband is a labour migrant to have intercourse with another man. People regret that

[93] *Ulawa*, the abstract noun formed from *mulawa*, sibling-in-law.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

a faithful woman whose husband stays away many years does not bear children, but they do not condone infidelity. The prolonged absence of men which leads to this unsatisfactory situation is seen as part of the disruption of the old order by the coming of the Whites. It is they who are responsible, both for the lack of children in marriages where the woman is faithful and for the occurrence of adultery in marriages where she is not. The virtue of bearing children and the virtue of fidelity are values in conflict and the Ngoni see only one solution, the ending of labour migration. This conflict appears with particular force when a man goes away leaving his wife pregnant. This action is in itself hazardous, for the man will not be there at the time of birth to confess his adultery, yet men do go away knowing their wives are pregnant. If a live child is born, it must be protected by the rite of 'taking up the child'.[19] If this is neglected the child may die, and it is in the interests therefore of the man's relatives as well as the woman's that it should be performed. The only consistent line of action is to ensure that the medicines which can be used as a substitute for the rite are available to the woman. These medicines are expensive, and relatives may be reluctant to find the money for them, particularly as the whole procedure is under the ban of the missions. The only other solution is for the woman to take a lover with whom she performs the rite. If they are caught, the excuse that they were sleeping together merely for 'taking up the child' is not accepted. Here the same conflict and the same attitude are seen as when a woman has an impotent husband.[20] To achieve a desirable end the woman must commit adultery; but woe betide her if she is caught in the act.

There is an important difference between the way in which the kinsfolk act at the level of village discussion and their behaviour later when matters are referred to the court. In the village they are fairly free to act without reference to the absent husband. They can give advice and can attempt to enforce mutually agreed damage payments of chicken, acting in the light of their opinion of what is in their own interest and in the general interest of their kinsman. They cannot deal in this way with divorce or with large damages for adultery. These matters must be referred to the court and here much more deliberate attention is paid to the wishes of the absent man. If a case of adultery is brought by the man's kin, the court enquires about the wishes of the husband in the matter. The husband's kin must produce a letter from him authorizing them to proceed against his wife and he must say in the letter whether he wishes to divorce her or merely to claim damages for adultery. The case is usually adjourned for three to six months while this is done. A woman who pleads for divorce on the ground of her husband's desertion is similarly told to write to him informing him

[19] See above, pp. 45f.
[20] See above, p. 34.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

that she intends to seek divorce if he does not reply. If the address of the migrant labourer is unknown to his relatives or to his wife, the court endeavours to trace him through the Administration.

Thus the husband's kin usually try to prove in court that the woman is seeking divorce because she has another husband in view, and sometimes imply that she has been committing adultery with him. I heard one man oppose the plea for divorce presented by the wife of an absent kinsman by saying that he was sure this woman had been committing adultery but that he had been unable to catch her in the act. Let the court postpone the case until he had good evidence and then he would agree to the plea. The husband's relatives are more certain of £3 damages if they can prove adultery, and the money is paid to them on behalf of the absent man. For her part the woman usually denies that she has any thought of remarriage. She arrives in court in her oldest and shabbiest clothes, to demonstrate both her husband's failure to clothe her and her own lack of desire to attract other men.

The general principle that no court action involving the husband's sexual rights can be taken without his consent applies even to cases of incest. It may be well known that a woman is living incestuously with, say, her father, but the husband's relatives cannot take her to court without the permission of the husband. Many husbands, on hearing from their relatives that their wives are committing adultery or are pregnant by other men, prefer to let the matter stand over until their return to the village which may be several years hence. Thus one woman may have been sleeping with her father for many years, and another have a growing brood of adulterine children, before at last they are brought to court by their returned husbands.

Even when a man and his wife are both living in the towns, their relatives may be called upon to settle differences between them. In one instance that came to my notice, a man and his wife both from the same village were living together in Lusaka. The woman had a still-birth and her husband went to a diviner to discover who was responsible for this. He was told by the diviner that his wife had been bewitched by his father's brother's son, who was also in Lusaka. The man wrote home to the village to complain. A meeting was held attended by important people in the village, and it was decided to write back and tell the two men that they must not be so foolish as to quarrel in this way. Not all men who go away remain in such close touch with the village but there is a great deal of correspondence back and forth, and this is augmented by the news brought by friends who come home. The intervention in a marital quarrel in the towns is one aspect of the way in which the field of social relations held in common by rural villagers stretches out to include kinsmen and former neighbours working many hundreds of miles away. Men who fall sick in Southern Rhodesia are fetched and escorted home, fathers go on holiday to visit their

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

migrant sons, and villagers mourn for a dead kinsman of whose death in the towns they have just heard.

Although it is possible for a couple to keep in contact with their rural kin if they are diligent in writing, the amount of interaction between the couple and their kin is much less under these conditions than when they are living in the village. Even when only the man is away and his wife is living at home, the ties linking relatives by marriage cannot in general be as strong as when the individual through whom these ties pass is present in face-to-face contact with his affines. None of the ceremonies of marriage, except the obtaining of a marriage certificate, can be performed if the man is away from the village and they must wait until he returns. Ngoni say 'You cannot send beer on a lorry'. When the man returns for a rest his wife's parents sometimes seize the opportunity to send him beer, but if he has been away a long time, they may be reluctant to brew for a man they do not know very well and whose character may have changed in the treacherous environment of the towns. Even if the man is working as near as Fort Jameson township, he may have difficulty in getting away from his job just at the time his parents-in-law want him at home.

Some men marry women they meet in the towns. Often an unmarried man leaves the village and a year or so later the news comes that he now has a wife. If the woman is from another tribe it is unlikely that the relatives at home will be told her name, and if the children of the marriage remain in Southern Rhodesia, they too will be unknown at home in the village. Sometimes, however, a man may marry a woman who comes from his own neighbourhood who has been visiting relatives in Southern Rhodesia or who has been divorced from another labour migrant. There is then more chance that the rural kin will be made aware of the marriage, and the children born to the couple may be sent home to one or other grandparent. If and when the man brings his bride back to the village, he goes to her village to give her relatives formal notification of what has happened, how he was in Southern Rhodesia and saw her and how they married there. Men sometimes offer the legalization payment for wives married in Southern Rhodesia when they return home. If the woman's relatives see that the man is treating his wife well, that she is well clothed and that the man is not running after other women, they may accept the marriage and brew beer for the man. If they do not approve of him there is little direct action they can take but they may try to start a quarrel sooner or later.

7. Child's parents-in-law

On either side of the married couple are their kin groups, and there is a special term to express the relationship between the parents of one spouse and the parents of the other. This relationship is thought of as one of limited co-operation. The two pairs of

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS Mpezeni

parents have different fields of interest, but the two fields overlap in the well-being of the married couple. At first there is much formality between them, and intermediaries are used whenever possible. Later they become more friendly. In the setting of the village meeting some parents appear to see themselves as allied in wisdom with the opposite parents against the foolishness of the younger generation whose immature behaviour has been the cause of the meeting. At other times, they may act to defend the rights and happiness of their child against the claims of the rival kin group. We have seen in the story of Daniel and Deborah[1] how yet another alignment can occur when both sets of parents support one spouse against the other. There is no simple way in which these different alignments can be predicted, for they are in fact the outcome of the continually changing pattern of social relationships within the local community. In general, all people wish to preserve the existing configuration of relationships, to support the interests of their children and to maintain the values of their society. In any particular situation, these goals may be mutually incompatible, and there is no over-riding principle, such as agnatic descent or a state-enforced code of law, to which all decisions can be referred. The tenuousness of the cohesion of the local group of kin is reflected in the varying alignments of parents in marital quarrels.

We tend to think of quarrels as socially disruptive, and in so far as they are not resolved they do lead to the break-up of existing groupings and the formation of new ones. Yet from another point of view, quarrelling is as much a cohesive process as is common participation in marriage ceremonial. Indeed, just as we have seen already[2] that a ceremony of marriage may be a vehicle for expressing hostility between kin groups as well as recognition of common interest, so a quarrel may lead to increased solidarity between kin groups as well as express hostility between spouses. By taking steps to resolve a quarrel, one kin group is brought into face-to-face contact with the other; there is visiting between their villages and mutual hospitality in somewhat the same way as in marriage ceremonial. The two groups may join to censure the erring spouse. The censured person may feel deserted by his (or her) parents but his father and his father-in-law may have come closer together.

The formality that characterizes relations between parents at the beginning of a marriage gradually disappears. A man or woman can always seek shelter and hospitality at the hut of a *child's parent-in-law* and in the final ceremony of marriage, when the married couple enter the wife's mother's hut, the two pairs of parents sit together and discuss the merits and limitations of their respective offspring. It is regarded as incestuous for a man to marry a woman whom he calls *child's parent-in-law*. By so doing his son's wife

[1] See above, p. 82.
[2] See above, pp. 76f.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

becomes her husband's sibling so that their marriage is then incestuous. I have recorded elsewhere[29] an instance in which a man married his son's wife's mother. His son's wife left her husband, saying that she could not sleep with her *sibling*. In court the old man was ordered to give up his new wife and on that understanding his son's wife returned to her husband. Yet when I left the area two years later the man and his son were both living with their wives, despite the order of the court.

It is quarrelling, adultery and divorce that bring together the two groups of kin to deliberate. Quarrelling is usually between man and wife and arises from their personal life together. There are very few quarrels between the two groups of kin over the custody of the children or about the handing over or return of marriage payments. The custody of children is determined in theory by the payment of bridewealth. In practice a child stays with its mother until it is weaned and may then be sent to a grandparent. Here there is no argument, even in theory, that all the children should go to one grandparent or the other depending on bridewealth. Some people say that the proper thing to do is to send the first child to the man's mother, the second to his wife's mother, the third to the man's mother, the fourth to his wife's mother, and so on. This is not carried out in practice, and a child goes to live with whichever grandparent asks for it or is conveniently situated. Some old widows run households containing up to half a dozen grandchildren, real and classificatory, and others live alone or with one grandchild although there are many grandchildren available. A married man is concerned that he should not appear to favour his own relatives at the expense of his affines, and he endeavours to see that his children go to live where they will be welcomed and well looked after. As with children, so it is with presents. If he returns from work and gives his father a shirt, it will be prudent the next time to give a shirt to his wife's father. It is only when the marriage has broken up that the two sets of relatives may see themselves opposed against each other, each insistent on its own rights. Even then, there is little point in quarrelling about children. A child soon becomes 'wise enough' and can choose for itself. I recorded an exceptional instance in which a man aged about twenty moved from the village of his father's father, where he had been living, to his mother's father's village on the instructions of his kinsmen, who said that as his father had not paid bridewealth for his mother, he must follow his mother's kin and not his father's. This kind of move does not often occur, and although only one marriage in twenty is accompanied by the payment of bridewealth, many people settle in their fathers' villages.

8. Other Kinsfolk

We have so far discussed the role of kin in a marriage in terms of

[29] See Barnes, op. cit. p. 232

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

603 the parents of the couple. If the parents are not available other kinsfolk can substitute for them, but in general it is a man's or woman's father who represents the interests of their local group of kin in situations in which these interests are contrasted with those of the spouse's kin. It is the woman's father who receives all the different payments made in marriage, and he is free to keep the payments or to distribute them among his relatives as he thinks fit. If a woman's father is dead or away at work the payments are made to her brother or her father's brother or her mother or some other relative who, in this situation, is prepared to assume the responsibilities that would otherwise be borne by him. Similarly, most men find the money for marriage payments themselves, but if a man is too poor to do this, it is first to his father that he turns for assistance. If, however, his father is dead or poverty-stricken or unwilling to provide the money, he can ask some other relative for help. Here we are dealing with situations in which the father or his substitute [591] is acting as the representative of the loosely structured local group of kin in situations in which his own children are specifically involved. There are, however, certain specific kinship relations which we can separate out from the general operation of local kinship and which impinge on the marriage relationship. A grandmother has a particular interest in the sexual aspect of marriage. The eldest brother acts as intermediary between a man and his father in the marriage negotiations. Younger brothers are interested in the disposal of widows. Children have rights in the property of a married couple. These are more specific obligations and rights, and while it is possible to find substitutes if the genealogically correct relatives are not there, there is more rigidity in these matters than in those in which the initiative lies with the local group of kinsfolk whoever they may be.

603 We have mentioned that the grandmother who rears a girl may be in charge of her seclusion at puberty (p. 32). Even when some other old woman is in charge, the girl's grandmother has some responsibility for her sexual behaviour. If a man does not sleep with his wife she complains to his grandmother, and although a man is not instructed in sexual matters by his grandmother, he can discuss them more freely with her than with any other kinswoman. Grandmothers sometimes play an important part in the resolution of a marital quarrel in the village, and they often act as midwives. It is a man's grandmother who complains to him if his wife is not bearing children, and it is to her that he may turn for advice about medicines. In the courts, however, grandmothers do not play so important a role. They are women, and important women use their influence more in village situations than in court, where men are in [562] control and male councillors look to a man's brothers and father for confirmation of evidence.

593 There is considerable formality in the relationship between a man and his own parents and this formality appears to be greater if

4: Barnes E-S (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

teach that the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of marriage payments is no concern of the Church, while the D.R.C.M. have a rule that bridewealth shall not be paid although this rule does not seem to be enforced. In general, in the village and in the court, the obligations of Christians are thought of as supplementary to their obligations as ordinary men and women, and Christian ceremonies to some extent supplement, but do not replace, traditional ceremonies. Thus there may be a church wedding in addition to a gall bladder ceremony, and a divorce in the eyes of the mission following after a divorce in court. Pressure has sometimes been put on chiefs and court members to act in accordance with the teaching of the mission, as in a past attempt on the part of the Catholic White Fathers to prevent courts from granting divorces to Catholics.[1] This type of intervention has applied particularly to courts where the chief was himself a Catholic. The Administration has opposed this pressure, and does not itself recognize any legal significance in religious ceremonies.

14. Spouses and kinsfolk

We may see the married couple in the middle of a system of relationships which connects them with persons and institutions each interested in their behaviour and in the maintenance of the marriage tie. By living peacefully together, by producing children, and by fulfilling their obligations to their kinsfolk and affines, they can, with discretion, satisfy the divergent claims implicit in this system of relationships. If they begin to quarrel, their kinsmen and neighbours attempt in the first instance to reconcile them. Only when this is impossible do those interested in the marriage begin to split up into groups with differing interests whose rival claims must be weighed by the court. Even then it is hoped that reconciliation will be possible, that a wife will return to her husband after she has paid him damages for adultery, and a husband return to his wife after many years of neglect. Whereas in the old days marriage was related to a fairly definite residential system, and rights and obligations were clear cut, nowadays the forces holding together a body of kinsfolk are weaker, and the danger of disruption of the group because of quarrelling is greater. The genealogical composition of the group is more variable and alters from year to year. Marriage, as one of the mechanisms by which local groups are built up, is part of the general political process, and is affected by inter-group and inter-personal relations that at first sight appear to have little to do with marriage. We observed that tribal and religious affiliation are significant criteria in a possible spouse. The divergent interests of less permanent groups, such as cliques and factions, influence choice of marriage partner and behaviour within marriage, as we have seen in the stories of Absolom and Mary (p. 60) and Amos and Eve (p. 28). Conversely, marital interests affect non-

[1] *Cf.* Richards, op. cit. pp. 83-4, for similar events among the Bemba.

4: Barnes E-S (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS Mpezeni

marital behaviour, as for example when a new-acquired wife persuaded her husband to seek work with her in Southern Rhodesia so that she might enjoy his prosperity to the exclusion of her senior co-wives who were left in the village.

Within the kinship system itself, ties of affinity compete with and are affected by ties of consanguinity. A quarrel between a married couple may lead to further quarrelling between affinally-linked relatives, and a dispute between a man and his wife's relatives may lead to a quarrel with his wife. Yet on the other hand a man who merely finds a woman and marries her without reference to her relatives is uncertain of his rights in the marriage and cannot appeal to her relatives if she misbehaves. There can be no ceremonies of marriage, and he must resort to subterfuge to get a marriage certificate. If he sends his children to his wife's parents to be cared for, they will accept them, but by so doing they do not accept him as a son-in-law. His wife's parents will deny that they know his name and if he takes his wife to court, they will mock him by saying 'We do not know this man'. Irrespective of marriage payments, a man cannot be validly and effectively married in the rural area without establishing his relationship to his affines. For a woman this is not always so, for her husband may have come from afar to work in the area, or he may earlier have broken away from his kinsmen. But without the support of his own kinsmen a man is dependent on his wife's kin for assistance in the marriage and, though the marriage may last, he is still one man living alone in a strange village.

4: Barnes E-S (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

had been paid, it was her husband and not her father who initiated proceedings against her and her lover. Residence was equated with political allegiance, and therefore it was inappropriate that her children should live in their father's village until he had acquired rights in them, that is until he had acquired rights *in genetricem* in his wife. These rights were transferred with the payment of bridewealth. The holder of the rights both *in uxorem* and *in genetricem* was the husband, but on his death the rights *in uxorem* passed to a junior patrilineal kinsman of the same generation while the rights *in genetricem* remained in the man's own segment. If the woman was barren, it was incumbent on those who had been recompensed for the transfer of rights *in genetricem* to provide another wife whose children occupied the position of children of the barren wife.

Nowadays the legalization payment confers rights *in uxorem* and bridewealth rights *in genetricem*. Rights *in genetricem* are inherited in the same way as before, but rights *in uxorem* do not pass automatically to a younger brother of the husband on his death. If a widow agrees to be inherited, and a younger brother willing to have her, then he acquires rights *in uxorem* over her without any further legalization payment. If, however, either no younger brother is forthcoming or the widow is unwilling, the rights revert to the woman's own group, who cannot themselves exercise them. When she takes a new husband he makes the legalization payment to them, and not to the kin of the dead husband, and thereby acquires his rights *in uxorem*. If rights *in genetricem* have already been transferred to the dead husband, the new husband can never acquire them. If at the beginning of a marriage bridewealth is offered, its acceptance transfers both rights *in uxorem* and *in genetricem*.

Whereas the rights *in genetricem* were definite in the old system, in the new they are vague and of doubtful value. In the old scheme they were related to position in a residential system of which one of the generating principles was patrilineal descent and succession. With the breakdown of this system one can no longer say so clearly that a man belongs to one group of kinsmen rather than another. The lineage segment is no longer a significant group with spatial reference and a hierarchy of authority. Kinsmen, however related, who live near one another tend to help each other, visit one another, and support each other in quarrels and in visits to court. Some of the men and women who go to court in support of A will also go in support of B, while others will not. B shares certain supporters with C, and so on. The men and women who are relatives and neighbours cannot be divided into a collection of mutually exclusive groups, for membership of one man's group partly overlaps with membership of another's, and every man has, as it were, a different set of people, some of them patrilateral kin, some matrilateral, and some affines, whom he is prepared to support. There is no widely-held indigenous theory of procreation such as in other cultures provides a rationaliza-

4: Barnes E-3 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

tion for associating children with one parent rather than the other. There is only the one proud dogma that the Ngoni, unlike their neighbours, are a patrilineal virilocal people. This reflects the actual dominance of the virilocal mode of residence but does not furnish a rule to which appeal can be made in specific cases. The only definite unit to which a man can be said to belong is his village, and such few attempts as are made to enforce rights *in genetricem* are expressed in terms of residence in villages. In marriages that are made outside the tribe, rights *in genetricem* become significant, for a child is not likely to wander to and fro between one tribe and another hundreds of miles away in the same way as children change from one village to another within the kingdom. Here then we find more attention paid to the payment of bridewealth and to rights *in genetricem* and these rights are enforceable through the police checks on buses and lorries.

If a man is away working his interests are represented by his kinsfolk. They cannot exercise his rights *in uxorem* for him, but if they are violated they can act on his behalf. His permission is necessary, however, before they can proceed to the court, and if they are awarded damages then they are under some sort of obligation to hand over the money to him when he returns. There was no situation comparable to this in the old system, for men did not go away for years at a time, and the violation of rights *in uxorem* was punishable by death.

The position of the man as holder of rights *in uxorem* over his wife is reinforced to some extent by mystical ties believed to connect the couple, and at the same time the man can fortify his rights by the use of medicines to ensure fidelity. During pregnancy, for a short while after childbirth, and during menstruation, the actions of man and wife affect one another automatically, and each is placed in danger of illness by the failure of the other to observe their mutual obligations. To protect his rights *in uxorem* a man may doctor his wife so that possible violators may be deterred by the fear of mystical retribution as well as action in the courts.

7. *Mystical beliefs and marriage stability*

The mystical connexion believed to exist between a man and his wife serves to define their relationship more closely, for this same connexion does not hold between a woman and her husband's kin or between a man and his wife's kin. The adultery of a pregnant woman's brother-in-law, like her husband's adultery, may threaten the peace of her local group of relatives and friends, and may even lead her to change her village or go to the court as a supporter. The important distinction between the adultery of her husband's brother and her husband's adultery is that the former does not automatically endanger her delivery while the latter does. A man confesses his adultery when his own wife gives birth, not when her sister is in labour. This connexion is definite, and is not extended

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni
Mzilikazi FRS

to the kin of the married couple however much the kin may intervene in the marriage and act on behalf of the couple.

The belief in the occurrence of such diseases as *mdulo* and *lugala* supports the values of Ngoni society, and acts as a check on behaviour which is wrong in Ngoni eyes. Beliefs in the efficacy of medicines do not have such a straightforward moral connotation, for in theory it is as easy for a man to harm the wife of someone else by the use of medicines, or for a woman to harm her co-wife, as it is for a man to harm his cuckold. Medicines can, therefore, be used for good or ill, depending on the intentions of those who manipulate them. Even the possibility of anti-social manipulation of medicines can, however, have a positive effect, as we have seen in the way in which a wife is encouraged to live demurely without attracting the attention of other men, lest when she spurns their advances they retaliate with medicines to harm her in childbirth. Old people like to maintain that in 'the time of peace' the Ngoni did not use medicines at all, although from what we know of the Zulu and other South-Eastern Bantu tribes from which the Ngoni came, this is almost certainly untrue. 'Our spears were our medicines', they say, meaning that when the state was powerful both internally and in relation to their neighbours, law and order and the wishes of the Paramount Chief could be enforced by physical sanctions. Only now, when the chieftainship has lost so much of its former power and men and women can do wrong without fear of punishment in the courts, is it necessary to fall back on mystical processes in an attempt to control other people's behaviour. By contrast the mystical diseases which can only be caught through socially disapproved actions operated at both stages of Ngoni history, although *mdulo* itself, unlike *lugala* and other similar conditions, appears to have been introduced by the Cewa.[6]

To a lesser extent the fear of venereal disease may be said to act as a stabilizing factor, since men admit that they are cautious in running after women on farms, in Fort Jameson and away in the big towns, because they fear syphilis. In the village an infected woman, if she cannot conceal her condition, is shunned by careful men, and a newcomer to the village who starts to flirt with her may be taken aside by an older man and warned of the risk of infection. It is an actionable offence for one partner in a marriage to transmit venereal disease to the other. Venereal disease is, however, commonly believed to be widespread and the fear of it cannot be said to be an efficient deterrent of adultery.

Despite the mystical safeguards and despite the fairly well defined rights *in uxorem*, marriage is not regarded as a permanent bond. There is a maxim 'Never confide in your wife, for tomorrow you may divorce her.' Consanguinity is permanent and unchangeable and a man should confide in a brother rather than in his wife. The

[6] Cf. Read, op. cit. 'The moral code . . .', p. 7.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

unity of full-siblings is the result of the established relationship between their mother and father. A man's relationship with his wife may in turn lead to solidarity between their children, but until his wife has stayed with him for many years and borne him live children their own relationship is always uncertain. He must acknowledge that she too has rights, that she must be clothed and respected and must be slept with. He must not abuse her at a beer party or hit her too often, and he must not try to trap her into adultery. When she runs away, he must go after her to apologise.

8. The support of relatives

It is the tenuousness of the marriage relationship which necessitates the co-operation of the relatives in the marriage. There are occasions when affines quarrel, as when a young woman is encouraged by her husband's kin to remain in their village to be delivered of her first child and at the same time is under pressure from her own relatives to move back to her own village for the confinement. A man who is anxious to build up his own cluster of huts in a village may attempt to force his sons and daughters to bring their spouses to live near him against the wishes of his children's affines. These struggles, where they occur, are expressed in terms of residence, for it is common residence that welds kinsfolk together. But in general affines co-operate rather than quarrel. Litigation about marriage payments is rare, and frequently divorces are granted without consideration of the return of marriage payments. During a marriage it is more important that the married couple should be exhorted to adjust themselves to each other and be tolerant of each other's foibles, than that each side should insist on its formal rights. Old people try to prevent marriages they consider unsuitable, but they do not usually try to make difficulties once a marriage has taken place. The successful marriages of a man's children bring him grandchildren to care for and play with, and *children's parents-in-law* who will welcome him and give him food, even if they do not always add to his own cluster of huts.

To some degree people appear to be afraid of the sorcery of an offended affine, but this is not a well-developed idea, and more frequently people express their reasons for trying to patch up a marriage that is in danger of breaking in terms of the need for everyone to 'live well together', without bringing troubles into the village. The well-being of the village and of the local group of kinsfolk within it has ultimate value for the Ngoni and is an end in itself. It follows that serious quarrels can only be resolved by means of some new residential alignment, involving moves from one cluster to another, and from one village to another. The village itself does not exist in isolation, and a village thrives because of the ties that link it to other villages in the vicinity. Marriages link villages together, by the bonds of affinity which cut across village boundaries, and by the interaction between groups of affines

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

628 in different villages. This distinction between the two groups
601 linked by marriage is symbolised by their spatial separation, and by
581 the existence of 'the man's village' and 'the woman's village', and we have seen how in the story of Daniel and Deborah (p. 82), Daniel wanted Deborah to be warned not in his village but in her own. He wished her own kinsfolk and her own local community to express their condemnation of her conduct, and this could only be done on their own ground. Without their co-operation it would have seemed that it was merely Daniel's relatives who were accusing Deborah, and trying to make trouble for her for no good reason. With the co-operation of her relatives it was possible to pass censure on Deborah with less fear that the marriage might come to an end.

594 It is because the marriage relationship is one which involves other kinsfolk as well as the married couple themselves that the elementary family is not an important grouping in Ngoni society. We have seen that in the old days children left their mother's hut on weaning and went to live with their grandmother or their parents' captor's great wife. A man slept in the same hut as his wife and their unweaned child, but their waking lives were spent with other people. Nowadays the pattern is more variable. Some children stay with their parents until they are old enough to sleep in a dormitory with other children of the same sex. They are fed and clothed by their parents from infancy until they grow up. Yet most old women still gather round themselves groups of three or four grandchildren for whose food and shelter they are responsible. The provision of clothes and school fees is a more difficult thing for an old woman to manage, and for these a child usually turns to its father, if the father is living near. Even the children who live in their parent's hut, however, soon join a play group and spend much of their time away from their parents. Other boys and girls who are
[603] sent home from Southern Rhodesia may have to rely entirely on their grandparents for clothes if their parents do not send money for them. A man who is richer than his neighbours, particularly
[556] if his riches are in money rather than in cattle, is entreated by his relatives to buy them clothes and other necessities, and he may make himself responsible for the clothing of his siblings' children.

Financially, then, the elementary family is a more distinct grouping than in the days when the only form of wealth was cattle, controlled by the heads of segments. But even financially it is not yet a very clear cut grouping and the same is true in other fields of activity. A man and his wife work together in their garden, and they and their children live on its produce, more or less. On the other hand, at the beginning of a marriage they may be dependent on the parents of one or the other for their food and may pool their resources with them. Many meals are taken in common in the village, a group of neighbours cooking for each other in turn and feeding themselves and their children and grandchildren from the same dishes. In court, a woman looks for support to her own kinsfolk

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

others, the Zulu and Nuer have agnatic lineages and rare divorce, while the Lozi and Ila lack agnatic lineages and have frequent divorce. The Ngoni before 1898 appear to belong to the first type and the Ngoni of the present-day to the second. In 'the time of peace' the fertility of the married woman was transferred by the payment of bridewealth to her husband's lineage segment, and the children whom she produced were recruits to that segment. Her agnates could never claim the children for their matrilateral segment. Associated with this system were the levirate, the sororate, and the right to enforce betrothal on pain of the return of gifts. The simple legal family was a relatively stable unit, and its position within the lineage segment was determined rigidly by the ranking of co-wives. Divorce was rare and could be effected only on the initiative of the husband. By contrast the affiliation of children nowadays is not fixed, and the very groups themselves to which they would formerly have attached themselves are no longer important. The children borne by a woman, whatever marriage payments have or have not been made for her, are potential recruits to local kin groups led by a variety of different relatives. Compared with the past, the simple legal family is unstable and divorce is frequent and easy. As might be expected, the levirate and sororate and enforceable betrothal, the trappings of the old system, have declined in importance.

Gluckman also suggests that in general, marriage payments fall in value with the decreasing dominance of patrilineal descent, although he cites the Ila as a virilocal people with high marriage payments, no agnatic lineages and frequent divorce. He regards the influence of property on marriage payments as secondary, but writes: 'On this hypothesis, which needs more testing, the amount of goods transferred and the divorce rate tend to be directly associated, but both are rooted in the kinship structure. It is rare divorce which allows high marriage payment, rather than high marriage payment which prevents divorce.'[7] The Ngoni material suggests that payments, kinship structure and divorce frequency are connected and that among them, as among the Ila, frequent divorce does not preclude high payments.

We may distinguish three phases in the history of Ngoni marriage payments. Prior to 1898 bridewealth varied in amount from one to a dozen beasts, depending on the status of the woman's father. In addition, recently captured women were married, both by men of high and low status, without payment of cattle. There is no indication that divorce was any less rare in one section of the community than another. In our pre-1898 sample, as set out in Table I, only one marriage out of eighteen ended in divorce, despite the absence of payments in half the marriages. It is true that in the single instance of divorce there were no marriage payments, yet even this marriage does not suggest marital instability as we

[7] Gluckman, op. cit., pp. 192, 200.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR
Mpezeni

as one from a graded segmentary society organized on a basis of patrilineal descent and modified by political promotion to a society of villages organized on a basis of omnidirectional kinship. In the past a man lived in the same place as his father and in charge of the segment allocated to him by his father. Now a man lives where he can find relatives of one kind or another who may be related to him agnatically, cognatically, affinally, or by any combination of these ways. He is not even restricted to consanguineal relatives, as in cognatic kinship systems, for he can affiliate himself to some person who is linked cognatically neither to him or to any of his potential descendants, as when he goes to live with his father's wife's mother's brother. Genealogical connexion can be traced along all possible paths and there are no mechanisms by which one path is automatically favoured or by which the length of a path is restricted. In consequence the genealogical constitution of any local group of relatives is complex, and every man is a potential recruit to many local groups. He selects between the numerous possibilities open to him on the basis of his own inclinations and in response to the various pressures exerted on him by his siblings, his parents, his wife, her parents, and others. Once he has made his choice he can always change his mind and move elsewhere if he finds his neighbours irksome. His wealth, either in cattle or money, is his own and he can take it with him when he moves. There are no rights in land (with the one exception of dry season gardens) which might otherwise tie him to one particular spot. As with residence, so with marriage payments, the formal and informal procedures of marriages, and the values associated with them. In all, considerable variation is tolerated. Indeed, we may well regard variation as a necessity in this system, for every man is subject to a mass of potential conflicting claims and he cannot possibly honour them all simultaneously. Variation occurs not because of different practices by various sections of the population but rather because of different individual decisions. A man decides for himself whether or not he will pay bridewealth, or take a hoeing party to his wife's mother's garden, or be suspended from the sacraments for marrying a second wife. Yet although he makes these choices himself, he is all the time subject to social pressure from kinsfolk and neighbours who will be affected by his decisions and who therefore try to influence them. A woman is not quite so free as a man, but she too can make many decisions for herself, and her relatives must appeal to her if they wish to influence her, for they cannot force her against her will. Man and wife living together are in a unique relationship which is personal and non-transferable, yet they live in the midst of kinsfolk and the well-being of one relative is the concern of all. The quarrels of a married couple are a danger to the cohesion of the local group in which they live, while the longer they live together, fertile and peaceful, the greater the local solidarity.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

606 [213] order, first women, then men, and the couple last. Inside the byre they are given beer which they drink without praising.[1] They then dance on to the hut of the woman's mother and enter. Beer and a plate of boiled maize have already been put inside. The dancers are joined by a few important people from the family of the woman, but the woman's parents do not come into the hut at this stage. The people from the man's village, including the woman and her husband, sit on one side of the hut and the people from the woman's family on the other. One of the woman's relatives makes a speech about the added responsibilities of the husband, how he must come and visit in their village and must help his parents-in-law. There is sometimes a speech in reply from the man's side. A threepenny bit or a sixpence is placed on a basketwork plate on top of the beer by one of the man's people, and someone from the woman's side does the same. The money is picked up by someone else from the woman's side. Sometimes there is another plate, into which a representative of the man will put the real gift, as opposed to these tokens, which may be as much as one pound. This is also taken up by someone from the woman's side and is later given to the father-in-law.

606 213 A woman from the wife's side then takes a spoonful of boiled maize and spits it out again. She is followed by a woman from the husband's side, who does the same. This ends the formal stage of the ceremony and drinking begins. The distribution of the beer is controlled by the senior man in the husband's party. If they are so inclined they may go back again into the byre and dance or they may wander round the village dancing. If the father-in-law wishes, he may kill a beast for them.[2] When they are tired and have drunk their fill, they go back to their own village, leaving a walking stick behind them in the hut.

On the next day the party of dancers come back again, this time with the husband's parents. They go back into the wife's mother's house and the wife's parents join them there. There is beer, and the wife's mother fills a bowl and presents it to her son-in-law, kneeling at his feet and drinking from the bowl before handing it over to him, after the usual fashion of offering a bowl of beer to anyone. The son-in-law drinks, and passes the beer round the hut. The rest of the pots of beer are then presented to the son-in-law's [607] people, and drinking begins again. The two sets of parents sit together, and discuss the characters of their children. There is much plain speaking. When all the beer is finished the party breaks up, and people return to their own villages. The proceedings on the second day are referred to as 'following the dancing-stick',[3]

[1] For the custom of praising when drinking beer, see Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 216 ff. The beer drunk in the byre is called *nkatulo*.
[2] Called *congenela*. Cf. Zulu *uku-ngenela*, to enter for (something).
[3] *Kulanda zinthonga*. Cf. Zulu *uku-landa*, to follow, and *in-tonga*, a stick.

5: Allan C-5 (1941)1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Lamba FQ8

The people in the original area were short of food but by no means at starvation level. This was ascertained by taking seven sample villages at random within the congested area and weighing their entire food stocks during the first fortnight of February. From these samples the following data were obtained.

Grain Stocks of Seven Ngoni Villages
(February 1941)

Total population			Total grain stocks
Men	Women	Children	lb.
292	389	531	24,710

Making no allowance for a special reserve of seed against a possible need for replanting, or for loss in preparing flour and for other reasons, the grain stock represents not more than 20 days usage, and supplies would probably be exhausted by early March. There was much variation between villages; one exceptional village had enough grain for 46 days while in another the grain stocks represented only 4 days supply. It will be remembered, however, that in an African social system, kinship obligations tend to even out the distribution of food supplies.

In striking contrast to these samples, a village which had recently made an illicit move to unoccupied private land was found to have, at the end of February, grain stocks representing 81 days supply. The effects of falling yields first make themselves felt in the bad years and it should be noted that the sampling was done in a year following a good climatic season. It will also be noted that villages which would in all probability have reached the starvation level had already transferred themselves.

There is, then, a time lag between the beginning of over-crowded conditions and the point at which obvious symptoms of land degeneration and soil erosion appear. The length of this time lag clearly depends on a number of factors acting together; the type of land and the system used on it, the degree of congestion, the original population density and the rate of population increase, if any. A further variable time lag elapses before conditions of general food shortage are reached. Under some conditions the process of land degradation may result in food shortage within a very few years, while in other cases this result may not appear for twenty years or more.

Within ten years of the creation of reserves in the Mkushi District obvious land degradation and recurrent food shortages in some areas had reached such a stage as to attract the attention of District Officers, missionaries and other interested persons, and to create an insistent demand for additional land. The population densities in these areas were 18 to 25 persons per square mile. Other areas of the Territory, notably the reserves of the

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

sophisticated informant remarked: 'The Cewa are just slaves, they merely eat. The Ngoni are like the Whites; they eat little and drink much.' 273 262 829

Economic Co-operation

There are other activities which entail inter-village ties. Cattle seek their own fodder, but small stock, pigs, goats, and sheep, are fed on husks and other scraps. A man whose animals have increased beyond his ability to feed them will farm out some of them to his friends, either in his own village or in some neighbouring one. The tender of the animals then exercises some control over the disposal of any natural increase and at the end of the arrangement he is entitled to be given one of the animals. The friends whom a man selects for this task are not always close relatives, and may sometimes be people to whom he can trace no genealogical relationship at all, but whom he may have met, for instance, in Southern Rhodesia. Other people acquire a reputation for integrity, and may be given animals to look after by their acquaintances. Cattle are not disposed of so widely, and there is more often a kinship connexion between the owner and the tender. On the other hand, cattle are more susceptible than small stock to tsetse fly, and in consequence there are many people in the new areas that have been recently resettled who have to keep their cattle in the village of a relative or friend who lives in an area free from fly. 233 476 628

Harvesting of crops is carried out by members of the household except in the case of the aged, who will call on their relatives to help them. Hut-building, making a new section of a garden, clearing the ground prior to planting, and, in particular, weeding the garden during the wet season, are activities that are often carried out by collective effort. Women, particularly pairs of widows, may work together in each other's gardens turn and turn about, and a man may be able to call on relatives, particularly his sons-in-law, to help in his garden without paying them for it. Most of the outside assistance that may be required in a garden is raised by means of a beer-party. The man's wife brews beer, and it is made known in the village and round about that on such-and-such a day there will be a party to hoe in their garden. A dozen or so people go to the garden in the morning, and work until the task set by the owner of the garden is completed. They then move to the village, and are refreshed with beer. Attendance at the beer-party is not restricted to those who have worked in the garden, and at some such parties a jar of beer may be specifically allocated to 241 476 602 ● 273 476 241

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

matrilineal matrilocal tribes, and the values associated with these systems of organization were not entirely forgotten. With the decline of the central power of the chieftainship after the conquest, cultural diversity within the tribe increased, so that at the present time we have a wide range of variation in the kinds of family found between one village and the next, and even within the same village. In particular, the irreconcilable difference between the organization of unilineal kin-groups on patrilineal and matrilineal principles appears to have led to a condition in which, for most of the tribe, the only groups of relatives that emerge as corporate groups are stocks, people with a common ancestor from whom they are descended through sons or daughters or both. These stocks are not mutually exclusive, and a man may think of himself at one time as belonging to one stock and at another time to another stock. Frequently alongside the true members of a stock there are other people who claim to belong to the same 'family'[1] who are in fact related affinally to the members of the stock. The organizing factor in domestic affairs is not kinship by itself but common residence combined with genealogical connexion. A stock, with its affinal accretions, emerges as the core of a corporate group of kindred only when its members live near one another and meet each other frequently. The strongest groups are those people of a stock who are living alongside one another in the same part of a village.

The use made of double affinal links in establishing attachment to a stock is noticeable. For example, a child will call a man who is his mother's divorced husband's wife's divorced husband by the term *father* (see Diagram 4 below). A man may bring into his village a wife from outside who may come with her children by a former husband. When grown up, the sons may also bring in wives accompanied by their children from former marriages. These children grow up to regard the village as their own and to think of themselves, in certain contexts, as belonging to the 'family' of the headman of the village. Informants in a village with a most complicated kinship structure will say 'We are all one family here'.

Kinship Terminology

The variation in the kinship systems of the different tribes from which the Ngoni recruited their members has led to some confusion in the use of kinship terms. Most of the terms now used are in the

[1] *Banja*, pl. *mabanja*.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

said to be due to their definite knowledge of common patrilineal descent rather than due to the common name. At the other extreme are names such as *tembo*, *lungu*, and *phiri*, which are derived from the neighbouring tribes of the region and are very common and have no connotation of exogamy.

Prior to the arrival of the Ngoni descent-names were inherited in the matrilineal line by the Cewa, Nsenga, and other tribes of the Eastern Province. Under Ngoni influence, the rule was reversed and the great majority even of recently incorporated Ngoni now bear the same names as their fathers. Some people do take the descent-names of their mother, as, for example, a child born in adultery who is not accepted by its mother's husband, or one whose father dies young so that it is brought up by a relative of its mother. As with the Tonga of Mazabuka, some descent-names have locally alternative forms, and in one instance men and women take different names.[1]

Appeal is sometimes made for protection and help on the basis of a common descent-name, but this is not a very strong tie and is invoked only when no closer link can be found. The principal uses of descent-names are in polite forms of address and in connexion with beer-drinking.

Marriage Payments

The initiative in choosing a spouse usually lies with the man. A woman who takes too much initiative in this matter is regarded, usually correctly, as likely to be unfaithful. In the old days marriages were more frequently arranged by the parents of the couple concerned, but now this happens only when the man is away. Men who are on the farms or in the mines send money home to brothers or fathers with instructions to find them suitable wives, and to offer the money as the legalization payment. During the 1939–45 War this arrangement was continued by soldiers who were away.

The most important payment in connexion with marriage is that made by the bridegroom to the bride's father which I shall call the legalization payment.[2] This payment is the one that establishes unequivocally the right of the husband to damages should his wife commit adultery or be allowed by the court to divorce him. It must be observed, however, that damages may still be awarded to the husband under certain conditions where no legalization payment has

[1] The name *sulu* for a man becomes *mvula* for a woman in certain areas.

[2] *Cimalo*, no plural. Cf. Young, *Customs and Folk Lore*, p. 61.

11:Lancaster G-5 (ca. 1935) 1937 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

migration about 1833; her burial place is unknown. She died without issue. She was the eldest daughter of Nombhengula, who was a brother of Ziwide and Sigode, and a son of Langa Vimba Nqumayo. She was a cousin to Manukusa, son of Sigode, and to Nompetu, daughter of Ziwide, who married Matshobana, the father of Mzilikazi. Sometimes it happens that a great wife or other major wife is not blessed with children. In these cases another woman is placed in her "house" with the object of raising seed to it. The children resulting are looked upon as children of the establishment in which their mother was "placed" and are in the same position as if born to the major wife; the eldest son of a chief's "Great Wife" inherits the chieftainship of the tribe on the death of his father. This was, and is, the custom of the Ngoni; it is also known to the Achewa and Ansenga Tribes. This custom is known to the Ngoni as *Nshlanze*.

Zongendaba therefore took as *Nshlanze* Sosera Nqumayo, a younger sister of Lsiwawa, and by her he had issue as follows:—Ntutu Mpezeni, the eldest son, "the Inkosana of the Indhlunkulu," Jadose, Mtwalalichi, and Ndhlobvu Makekevu. Sosera was born about 1808 near St. Lucia Bay. She migrated with the chief and followed him through all his wanderings until his death, after which she accompanied her son and heir, Ntutu Mpezeni, into what is now the Fort Jameson district. There she settled in her village called "Dingeni," where she died in 1900 and was buried near the site of the old village of Mtenguleni Uka Sosera close to the Kakolo stream; her grave is now marked by an euphorbia tree. The site is on the farm owned by Major Jefferies, O.B.E., which prior to the invasion of the Ngoni used to be the land of the Achewa chief, Kampara.

Sosera is well remembered by many natives who are living to-day, and although she died at a great age it is said that she was in possession of her full faculties until the last. She is described as being a real chieftainess and it is said that in later years if annoyed by the younger generation she would lay about her with her *mchizo* (staff) in a lusty manner. Many amusing tales are told of her astuteness and dry humour.

After Zongendaba's death, Sosera chose for a very beautiful woman, named Nthonane, who was a young sister-wife to the house and who had borne no children, one, Sawasa Mazunko, as a seed raiser, for which he received twenty head of cattle. A daughter was born and named Ndawiri Jere; she now resides in the Fort Manning District of Nyasaland and from her this information was obtained. Ndawiri looked upon Ntutu Mpezeni as her brother, and Ndawiri was, and is, looked upon as one of Zongendaba's children. She married Ndawombi, since dead, and has one son, Ndawombi Hara.

It is agreed by the old Indunas that Ntutu Mpezeni would have been about nine years of age when he crossed over the Zambesi, that he was carried across as befitted a Paramount Chief's heir, that, prior to the crossing, Zongendaba had given him a little shield and an assegai, and that he had killed his first duiker buck before the crossing. This is also borne out by the sons of Zimakazi Lavu Ngoma and Ngandu Mbawa, both of whose fathers were set the task of being servants to the chief's heir in his youth.